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OLD ENGLISH PLAYS;

BEING A

SELECTION

FROM THE

EARLY DRAMATIC WRITERS.

VOLUME V.

CONTAINING

WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN.
TRICK TO CATCH THE OLD ONE.
A NEW WONDER, A WOMAN NEVER VEXT.
APPIUS AND VIRGINIA.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND ROWLAND,
Goswell Street;

FOR JOHN MARTIN, HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
BOOKSELLER TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

1815.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN:

A

TRAGEDY.

BY

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Duke of Florence.
Lord Cardinal, brother to the Duke.
Two Cardinals more.
A Lord.
Fabritio, father to Isabella.
Hippolito, brother to Fabritio.
Guardiano, uncle to the Foolish Ward.
The Ward, a rich young heir.
Leantio, a factor, husband to Brancha.
Sordido, the Ward's man.

Livia, sister to Fabritio and Hippolito.
Isabella, daughter to Fabritio.
Brancha, Leantio's wife.
Mother to Leantio, a widow.

States of Florence, Citizens, an Apprentice, Boys, Messenger, and Servants.

WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN*.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter LEANTIO *with* BRANCHA, *and his Mother.*

Moth. THY sight was never yet more precious
to me:
Welcome! with all the affection of a mother,
That comfort can express from natural love:
Since thy birth-joy (a mother's chiefest gladness,
After she's undergone her curse of sorrows)
Thou was't not more dear to me, than this hour
Presents thee to my heart. Welcome, again!

Leant. (Aside.) Alas, poor affectionate soul,
how her joys speak to me!
I have observ'd it often, and I know it is
The fortune commonly of knavish children
To have the loving'st mothers.

Moth. What's this gentlewoman?

Leant. Oh, you have nam'd the most unvalued
purchase,

* The address by N. Richards to our author, should properly have been prefixed to this play; but as this and the preceding were published in one volume, in 1657, and it is there of course found in its present situation, I thought it unnecessary to remove it, particularly as it is now in a degree connected with his life.

That youth of man had ever knowledge of.
As often as I look upon that treasure,
And know it to be mine, (there lies the blessing!)
It joys me that I ever was ordain'd
To have a being, and to live 'mongst men;
Which is a fearful living, and a poor one,
Let a man truly think on't.
To have the toil and griefs of fourscore years
Put up in a white sheet, ty'd with two knots:
Methinks it should strike earthquakes in adulterers,
When e'en the very sheets they commit sin in,
May prove, for ought they know, all their last garments.
Oh, what a mark were there for women then!
But beauty, able to content a conqueror,
(Whom earth could scarce content) keeps me in compass:
I find no wish in me bent sinfully
To this man's sister, or to that man's wife:
In love's name let 'em keep their honesties,
And cleave to their own husbands, 'tis their duties.
Now when I go to church, I can pray handsomely;
Nor come like gallants only to see faces,
As if lust went to market still on Sundays.
I must confess I am guilty of one sin, mother,
More than I brought into the world with me;
But that I glory in; 'tis theft; but noble
As ever greatness yet shot up withal.

Moth. How's that?

Leant. Never to be repented, mother,
Though sin be death; I had died, if I had not sin'd,
And here's my master-piece: Do you now behold her?

Look on her well, she's mine; look on her better;
Now say if 't be not the best piece of theft
That ever was committed? and I have my pardon
for't;
'Tis seal'd from heaven by marriage.
Moth. Married to her!
Leant. You must keep counsel, mother, I am
undone else;
If it be known, I have lost her; do but think how
What that loss is; life's but a trifle to't!
From Venice, her consent and I have brought her
From parents great in wealth, more now in rage;
But let storms spend their furies; now we have got
A shelter o'er our quiet innocent loves,
We are contented: little money she's brought me;
View but her face, you may see all her dowry,
Save that which lies lock'd up in hidden virtues,
Like jewels kept in cabinets.
Moth. You're to blame,
(If your obedience will give way to a check)
To wrong such a perfection.
Leant. How!
Moth. Such a creature,
To draw her from her fortune, which, no doubt,
At the full time, might have prov'd rich and noble;
You know not what you have done: my life can
give you
But little helps, and my death lesser hopes;
And hitherto your own means has but made shift
To keep you single, and that hardly too:
What ableness have you to do her right then
In maintenance fitting her birth and virtues?
Which ev'ry woman of necessity looks for,

And most to go above it; not confin'd
By their conditions, virtues, bloods, or births,
But flowing to affections, wills, and humours.
Leant. (Aside to his Moth.) Speak low, sweet mother; you are able to spoil as many
As come within the hearing: if it be not
Your fortune to mar all, I have much marvel.
I pray do not you teach her to rebel,
When she's in a good way to obedience;
To rise with other women in commotion
Against their husbands, for six gowns a year,
And so maintain their cause (when they're once up)
In all things else that require cost enough.
They are all of 'em a kind of spirits soon rais'd,
But not so soon laid, mother: As, for example,
A woman's belly is got up in a trice,
A simple charge ere it be laid down again:
So ever in all their quarrels, and their courses.
And I'm a proud man, I hear nothing of 'em;
They're very still, I thank my happiness,
And sound asleep; pray let not your tongue wake 'em.
If you can but rest quiet, she's contented
With all conditions that my fortunes bring her to;
To keep close as a wife that loves her husband;
To go after the rate of my ability,
Not the licentious swinge of her own will,
Like some of her old school-fellows; she intends
To take out other works in a new sampler,
And frame the fashion of an honest love,
Which knows no wants: but mocking poverty
Brings forth more children, to make rich men wonder

At divine providence, that feeds mouths of infants,
And sends them none to feed; but stuffs their rooms
With fruitful bags, their beds with barren wombs.
Good mother, make not you things worse than they are,
Out of your too much openness; pray take heed on't;
Nor imitate the envy of old people,
That strive to mar good sport, because they are perfect.
I would have you more pitiful to youth,
Especially to your own flesh and blood.
I'll prove an excellent husband, (here's my hand),
Lay in provision, follow my business roundly,
And make you a grandmother in forty weeks.
Go, pray salute her, bid her welcome cheerfully.

Moth. Gentlewoman, *(salutes her)* thus much is a debt of courtesy,
Which fashionable strangers pay each other
At a kind meeting; then there's more than one
Due to the knowledge I have of your nearness.
I am bold to come again, and now salute you
By th' name of daughter, which may challenge more
Than ordinary respect. [*Salutes her again.*

Leant. (Aside.) Why, this is well now;
And I think few mothers of threescore will mend it.

Moth. What I can bid you welcome to, is mean;
But make it all your own: we are full of wants,
And cannot welcome worth.

Leant. (Aside.) Now this is scurvy;
And spoke as if a woman lack'd her teeth.

These old folks talk of nothing but defects,
Because they grow so full of 'em themselves.
Bran. Kind mother, there is nothing can be wanting
To her that does enjoy all her desires.
Heaven send a quiet peace with this man's love,
And I am as rich as virtue can be poor;
Which were enough after the rate of mind,
To erect temples for content plac'd here.
I have forsook friends, fortunes, and my country,
And hourly I rejoice in't. Here's my friends,
And few is the good number: (*To Leant.* Thy successes
(Howe'er they look), I will still name my fortunes,
Hopeful or spiteful, they shall all be welcome:
Who invites many guests, has of all sorts,
As he that traffics much, drinks of all fortunes,
Yet they must all be welcome, and us'd well.
I'll call this place the place of my birth now,
And rightly too; for here my love was born,
And that's the birth-day of a woman's joys.
You have not bid me welcome since I came.
Leant. That I did questionless.
Bran. No sure? how was't?
I have quite forgot it.
Leant. Thus. [*Kisses her.*
Bran. Oh, sir, 'tis true;
Now I remember well: I have done thee wrong,
Pray take 't again, sir. [*Kisses him.*
Leant. How many of these wrongs
Could I put up in an hour? and turn up the glass*
For twice as many more.

* In allusion to the hour-glass.

Moth. Will't please you to walk in, daughter?
Bran. Thanks, sweet mother!
The voice of her that bare me, is not more pleasing. [*Exeunt.*
Leant. Though my own care, and my rich master's trust,
Lay their commands both on my factorship,
This day and night, I'll know no other business
But her and her dear welcome. 'Tis a bitterness
To think upon to-morrow! that I must leave
Her still to the sweet hopes of the week's end;
That pleasure should be so restrain'd and curb'd
After the course of a rich work-master,
That never pays till Saturday night!
Marry, it comes together in a round sum then,
And does more good, you'll say: Oh, fair-ey'd Florence!
Didst thou but know what a most matchless jewel
Thou now art mistress of, a pride would take thee,
Able to shoot destruction through the bloods
Of all thy youthful sons: but 'tis great policy
To keep choice treasures in obscurest places:
Should we show thieves our wealth, 'twould make 'em bolder:
Temptation is a devil will not stick
To fasten upon a saint; take heed of that;
The jewel is cas'd up from all mens' eyes.
Who could imagine now a gem were kept,
Of that great value under this plain roof?
But how in times of absence? what assurance
Of this restraint then? Yes, yes! there's one with her.
Old mothers know the world; and such as these,
When sons lock chests, are good to look to keys.
[*Exit.*

Scene II.

Enter Guardiano, Fabritio, *and* Livia.

Guard. What, has your daughter seen him yet? know you that?

Fab. No matter, she shall love him.

Guard. Nay, let's have fair play:
He has been now my ward some fifteen year,
And 'tis my purpose (as time calls upon me,
By custom seconded, and such moral virtues)
To tender him a wife: now, sir, this wife
I'd fain elect out of a daughter of yours;
You see my meaning's fair: if now this daughter
So tendered (let me come to your own phrase, sir,)
Should offer to refuse him, I were hansell'd.
(Aside.) Thus am I fain to calculate all my words,
For the meridian of a foolish old man,
To take his understanding. What do you answer, sir?

Fab. I say still, she shall love him.

Guard. Yet again?
And shall she have no reason for this love?

Fab. Why, do you think that women love with reason?

Guard. (Aside.) I perceive fools are not at all hours foolish,
No more than wise men wise.

Fab. I had a wife,
She ran mad for me; she had no reason for't,
For ought I could perceive. What think you, lady sister?

Guard. (Aside.) 'Twas a fit match that,
Being both out of their wits: a loving wife, it seem'd
She strove to come as near you as she could.
Fab. And if her daughter prove not mad for love too,
She takes not after her; nor after me,
If she prefer reason before my pleasure:
You're an experienc'd widow, lady sister,
I pray let your opinion come amongst us.
Liv. I must offend you then, if truth will do't,
And take my niece's part, and call't injustice
To force her love to one she never saw.
Maids should both see, and like; all little enough;
If they love truly after that, 'tis well.
Counting the time, she takes one man till death,
That's a hard task, I tell you; but one may
Enquire at three years end amongst young wives,
And mark how the game goes.
Fab. Why, is not man
Tied to the same observance, lady sister,
And in one woman?
Liv. 'Tis enough for him:
Besides, he tastes of many sundry dishes
That we poor wretches never lay our lips to;
As obedience forsooth, subjection, duty, and such kickshaws,
All of our making, but serv'd in to them;
And if we lick a finger, then sometimes,
We are not to blame; your best cooks use it.
Fab. Thou'rt a sweet lady, sister, and a witty.
Liv. A witty! Oh, the bud of commendation
Fit for a girl of sixteen! I am blown, man!
I should be wise by this time; and for instance,

I have buried my two husbands in good fashion,
And never mean more to marry.

Guard. No! why so, lady?

Liv. Because the third shall never bury me:
I think I am more than witty: how think you, sir?

Fab. I have paid often fees to a counsellor
Has had a weaker brain.

Liv. Then I must tell you,
Your money was soon parted.

Guard. Light her now, brother.

Liv. Where is my niece? let her be sent for straight,
If you have any hope 'twill prove a wedding:
'Tis fit i'faith she should have one sight of him,
And stop upon't, and not be join'd in haste,
As if they went to stock a new found land.

Fab. Look out her uncle, and you're sure of her:
Those two are ne'er asunder; they've been heard
In argument at midnight; moonshine nights
Are noon days with them; they walk out their sleeps;
Or rather at those hours, appear like those
That walk in 'em, for so they did to me.
Look you, I told you truth; they're like a chain,
Draw but one link, all follows.

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* ISABELLA.

Guard. Oh affinity!
What piece of excellent workmanship art thou!
'Tis work clean wrought, for there's no lust, but love in't,
And that abundantly; when in stranger things,
There is no love at all, but what lust brings.

Fab. On with your mask! for 'tis your part to see now,
And not be seen: Go to, make use of your time;
See what you mean to like; nay, and I charge you,
Like what you see: do you hear me? there's no dallying;
The gentleman's almost twenty, and 'tis time
He were getting lawful heirs, and you a breeding on 'em.

Isab. Good father!

Fab. Tell not me of tongues and rumours.
You'll say the gentleman is somewhat simple;
The better for a husband, were you wise;
For those that marry fools, live ladies' lives.
On with the mask! I'll hear no more! he's rich;
The fool's hid under bushels.

Liv. Not so hid neither,
But here's a foul great piece of him methinks;
What will he be, when he comes altogether?

Enter the WARD *with a Trap-stick, and* SORDIDO *his Man.*

Ward. Beat him?
I beat him out o' th' field with his own cat-stick,
Yet gave him the first hand.

Sord. Oh, strange!

Ward. I did it;
Then he set Jacks on me.

Sord. What, my lady's tailor?

Ward. Ay, and I beat him too.

Sord. Nay, that's no wonder,
He's us'd to beating.

Ward. Nay, I tickl'd him
When I came once to my tippings.

Sord. Now you talk on 'em; there was a poulterer's wife made a great complaint of you last night to your gardener, that you struck a bump in her child's head as big as an egg.

Ward. An egg may prove a chicken, then in time the poulterer's wife will get by't. When I am in game, I am furious; came my mother's eyes in my way, I would not lose a fair end: no, were she alive, but with one tooth in her head, I should venture the striking out of that. I think of nobody when I am in play, I am so earnest. Coads me, my gardianer! Prithee lay up my cat and cat-stick safe *.

Sord. Where, sir; i' th' chimney corner?

Ward. Chimney corner!

Sord. Yes, sir; your cats are always safe i' th' chimney corner,
Unless they burn their coats.

Ward. Marry, that I am afraid on!

Sord. Why, then, I will bestow your cat i' th' gutter,
And there she's safe, I am sure.

Ward. If I but live
To keep a house, I'll make thee a great man,
If meat and drink can do't. I can stoop gallantly,
And pitch out when I list: I'm dog at a hole:
I marv'l my guardianer does not seek a wife for me;

* *Cat-stick* and *trap-stick* are the same, I conceive, as is now, in our northern counties, called *cat-stick;* with which a wooden ball, or oblong piece of wood, about three inches in length, there called a trippet, is struck by the players. The game seems formerly, from a passage in Act III., to have been called *cat and trap.*

I protest I'll have a bout with the maids else,
Or contract myself at midnight to the larder-woman,
In presence of a fool, and a sack-posset.

Guard. Ward!

Ward. I feel myself after any exercise
Horribly prone: let me but ride, I'm lusty,
A cock-horse, straight i'faith!

Guard. Why, Ward, I say!

Ward. I'll forswear eating eggs on moonshine nights;
There's ne'er a one I eat, but turns into a cock
In four-and-twenty hours; if my hot blood
Be not took down in time, sure 'twill crow shortly.

Guard. Do you hear, sir? follow me, I must new school you.

Ward. School me? I scorn that now; I am past schooling.
I am not so base to learn to write and read;
I was born to better fortunes in my cradle.

[*Exit.*

Fab. How do you like him, girl? This is your husband.
Like him, or like him not, wench, you shall have him,
And you shall love him.

Liv. Oh, soft there, brother! though you be a justice,
Your warrant cannot be serv'd out of your liberty;
You may compel, out of the power of father,
Things merely harsh to a maid's flesh and blood;
But when you come to love, there the soil alters;
You're in another country, where your laws
Are no more set by, than the cacklings
Of geese in Rome's great capitol.

Fab. Marry him she shall then;
Let her agree upon love afterwards. [*Exit.*
Liv. You speak now, brother, like an honest mortal
That walks upon the earth with a staff;
You were up i' th' clouds before; you'd command love,
And so do most old folks that go without it.
(To Hip.) My best and dearest brother! I could dwell here;
There is not such another seat on earth,
Where all good parts better express themselves.
Hip. You'll make me blush anon.
Liv. 'Tis but like saying grace before a feast then,
And that most comely; thou art all a feast,
And she that has thee, a most happy guest.
Prithee cheer up thy niece with special counsel*. [*Exit.*
Hip. (Aside.) I would 'twere fit to speak to her what I would! but
'Twas not a thing ordain'd; heaven has forbid it;
And 'tis most meet that I should rather perish
Than the decree divine receive least blemish:
Feed inward you my sorrows, make no noise,
Consume me silent, let me be stark dead
Ere the world know I'm sick. You see my honesty,
If you befriend me, so.
Isab. (Aside.) Marry a fool!
Can there be greater misery to a woman
That means to keep her days true to her husband,

* Livia's quitting the stage is not marked in the original, and yet it seems certain that she is not present during the ensuing dialogue between Hippolito and Isabella.

And know no other man? so virtue wills it.
Why; how can I obey and honour him,
But I must needs commit idolatry?
A fool is but the image of a man,
And that but ill made neither. Oh the heart-breakings
Of miserable maids, where love's enforc'd!
The best condition is but bad enough:
When women have their choices, commonly
They do but buy their thraldoms, and bring great portions
To men to keep 'em in subjection;
As if a fearful prisoner should bribe
The keeper to be good to him, yet lies in still,
And glad of a good usage, a good look
Sometimes; by'r lady, no misery surmounts a woman's!
Men buy their slaves, but women buy their masters:
Yet honesty and love makes all this happy,
And next to angels, the most bless'd estate.
That providence, that has made ev'ry poison
Good for some use, and sets four warring elements
At peace in man, can make a harmony
In things that are most strange to human reason.
Oh, but this marriage!—What, are you sad too, uncle?
Faith then there's a whole household down together:
Where shall I go to seek my comfort now
When my best friend's distressed? What is't afflicts you, sir?

Hip. Faith, nothing but one grief that will not leave me,
And now 'tis welcome; ev'ry man has something

To bring him to his end, and this will serve,
Join'd with your father's cruelty to you,
That helps it forward.

Isab. Oh, be cheer'd, sweet uncle!
How long has 't been upon you? I ne'er spy'd it:
What a dull sight have I! how long I pray, sir?

Hip. Since I first saw you, niece, and left Bologna.

Isab. And could you deal so unkindly with my heart,
To keep it up so long hid from my pity?
Alas! how shall I trust your love hereafter?
Have we pass'd through so many arguments,
And miss'd of that still, the most needful one?
Wak'd out whole nights together in discourses,
And the main point forgot? we are to blame both;
This is an obstinate, wilful, forgetfulness,
And faulty on both parts: let's lose no time now;
Begin, good uncle, you that feel 't; what is it?

Hip. You of all creatures, niece, must never hear on't;
'Tis not a thing ordain'd for you to know.

Isab. Not I, sir? all my joys that word cuts off;
You made profession once you lov'd me best;
'Twas but profession!

Hip. Yes, I do't too truly,
And fear I shall be chid for't. Know the worst then:
I love thee dearlier than an uncle can.

Isab. Why so you ever said, and I believ'd it.

Hip. (Aside.) So simple is the goodness of her thoughts,
They understand not yet th' unhallowed language
Of a near sinner: I must yet be forced

(Though blushes be my venture) to come nearer.
As a man loves his wife, so love I thee.

Isab. What's that?

Methought I heard ill news come toward me,
Which commonly we understand too soon;
Then over quick at hearing; I'll prevent it,
Though my joys fare the harder; welcome it:
It shall ne'er come so near mine ear again.
Farewell all friendly solaces and discourses,
I'll learn to live without ye, for your dangers
Are greater than your comforts: what's become
Of truth in love, if such we cannot trust,
When blood, that should be love, is mix'd with lust!

[*Exit.*

Hip. The worst can be but death, and let it come;
He that lives joyless, ev'ry day's his doom.

[*Exit.*

Scene III.

Enter Leantio *alone.*

Lean. Methinks I'm e'en as dull now at departure,
As men observe great gallants the next day
After a revel: you shall see 'em look
Much of my fashion, if you mark 'em well.
'Tis e'en a second hell to part from pleasure,
When man has got a smack on't: as many holidays
Coming together make your poor heads idle
A great while after, and are said to stick
Fast in their fingers' ends, e'en so does game
In a new married couple; for the time

It spoils all thrift, and indeed lies a-bed
To invent all the new ways for great expences.
[*Brancha and his Mother discovered standing at a window above.*
See, an she be not got on purpose now
Into the window to look after me:
I have no power to go now, an I should be hang'd:
Farewell all business! I desire no more
Than I see yonder: let the goods at quay
Look to themselves; why should I toil my youth out?
It is but begging two or three years sooner,
And stay with her continually: is't a match?
Fie! what a religion have I leap'd into?
Get out again for shame; the man loves best
When his care's most; *that* shows his zeal to love:
Fondness is but the idiot to affection,
That plays at hot-cockles with rich merchants' wives;
Good to make sport withal when the chest's full,
And the long warehouse cracks. 'Tis time of day
For us to be more wise; 'tis early with us;
And if they lose the morning of their affairs,
They commonly lose the best part of the day:
Those that are wealthy, and have got enough,
'Tis after sunset with 'em; they may rest,
Grow fat with ease, banquet, and toy, and play,
When such as I enter the heat o' th' day,
And I'll do't cheerfully.

Bran. I perceive, sir,
You're not gone yet; I have good hope you'll stay now.

Lean. Farewell; I must not.

Bran. Come, come, pray return!

To-morrow (adding but a little care more)
Will dispatch all as well; believe me 'twill, sir.
Leant. I could well wish myself where you would have me;
But love that's wanton, must be rul'd awhile
By that that's careful, or all goes to ruin:
As fitting is a government in love,
As in a kingdom; where 'tis all mere lust,
'Tis like an insurrection in the people
That rais'd, in self-will, wars against all reason;
But love, that is respective for increase,
Is like a good king, that keeps all in peace.
Once more farewell.
Bran. But this one night, I prithee.
Leant. Alas, I'm in for twenty if I stay,
And then for forty: I have such luck to flesh,
I never bought a horse but he bore double.
If I stay any longer, I shall turn
An everlasting spendthrift; as you love
To be maintain'd well, do not call me again,
For then I shall not care which end goes forward:
Again farewell to thee. [*Exit.*
Bran. Since it must; farewell too.
Moth. 'Faith, daughter, you're to blame: you take the course
To make him an ill husband; troth you do;
And that disease is catching, I can tell you,
Ay, and soon taken by a young man's blood,
And that with little urging: nay fie, see now,
What cause have you to weep? would I had no more,
That have liv'd threescore years; there were a cause,

And 'twere well thought on; trust me you're to blame;
His absence cannot last five days at utmost.
Why should those tears be fetch'd forth? cannot love
Be e'en as well express'd in a good look,
But it must see her face still in a fountain?
It shows like a country maid dressing her head
By a dish of water: Come, 'tis an old custom
To weep for love.

Enter two or three BOYS, *and a* CITIZEN *or two, with an* APPRENTICE.

Boys. Now they come, now they come.
2 *Boy.* The duke.
3 *Boy.* The states.
Cit. How near, boy?
1 *Boy.* I' th' next street, sir, hard at hand.
Cit. You, sirrah, get a standing for your mistress,
The best in all the city.
App. I hav't for her, sir;
'Twas a thing I provided for her over night,
'Tis ready at her pleasure.
Cit. Fetch her to't then; away, sir!
Bran. What's the meaning of this hurry,
Can you tell, mother?
Moth. What a memory
Have I! I see by that years come upon me.
Why 'tis a yearly custom and solemnity,
Religiously observ'd by the Duke and States
To St. Mark's temple, the fifteenth of April:
See if my dull brains had not quite forgot it!

'Twas happily question'd of thee, I had gone down else,
Sat like a drone below, and never thought on't.
I would not to be ten years younger again,
That you had lost the sight! now you shall see
Our Duke; a goodly gentleman of his years.

Bran. Is he old, then?

Moth. About some fifty-five.

Bran. That's no great age in man; he's then at best
For wisdom, and for judgment.

Moth The Lord Cardinal,
His noble brother; there's a comely gentleman,
And greater in devotion than in blood.

Bran. He's worthy to be mark'd.

Moth. You shall behold
All our chief states of Florence: you came fortunately
Against this solemn day.

Bran. I hope so always. [*Music.*

Moth. I hear 'em near us now: do you stand easily?

Bran. Exceeding well, good mother.

Moth. Take this stool.

Bran. I need it not, I thank you.

Moth. Use your will then.

Enter in great solemnity six KNIGHTS *bare-headed, then two* CARDINALS, *and then the* LORD CARDINAL, *then the* DUKE; *after him the States of Florence by two and two, with variety of Music and Song.* [*Exeunt.*

Moth. How like you [it], daughter?

Bran. 'Tis a noble state!

Methinks my soul could dwell upon the reverence
Of such a solemn and most worthy custom.
Did not the Duke look up? methought he saw us.

Moth. That's ev'ry one's conceit that sees a Duke;
If he look stedfastly, he looks straight at them,
When he, perhaps, good careful gentleman,
Never minds any, but the look he casts,
Is at his own intentions, and his object
Only the public good.

Bran. Most likely so.

Moth. Come, come, we'll end this argument below. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. Scene I.

Enter Hippolito, *and* Lady Livia *the Widow.*

Liv. A strange affection, brother! when I think on't,
I wonder how thou cam'st by't.
Hip. E'en as easily
As man comes by destruction, which ofttimes
He wears in his own bosom.
Liv. Is the world
So populous in women, and creation
So prodigal in beauty, and so various,
Yet does love turn thy point to thine own blood?
'Tis somewhat too unkindly: must thy eye
Dwell evilly on the fairness of thy kindred,
And seek not where it should? it is confin'd
Now in a narrower prison than was made for't:
It is allow'd a stranger; and where bounty
Is made the great man's honour, 'tis ill husbandry
To spare, and servants shall have small thanks for't;
So he heaven's bounty seems to scorn and mock,
That spares free means, and spends of his own stock.
Hip. Ne'er was man's misery so soon sow'd up,
Counting how truly.
Liv. Nay, I love you so,
That I shall venture much to keep a change from you,

So fearful as this grief will bring upon you:
Faith it even kills me, when I see you faint
Under a reprehension, and I'll leave it,
Though I know nothing can be better for you.
Prithee, sweet brother, let not passion waste
The goodness of thy time, and of thy fortune:
Thou keep'st the treasure of that life I love,
As dearly as mine own; and if you think
My former words too bitter, (which were minister'd
By truth and zeal) 'tis but a hazarding
Of grace and virtue, and I can bring forth
As pleasant fruits as sensuality wishes
In all her teeming longings: this I can do.

Hip. Oh, nothing that can make my wishes perfect!

Liv. I would that love of yours were pawn'd to't, brother,
And as soon lost that way, as I could win.
Sir, I could give as shrewd a lift to chastity,
As any she that wears a tongue in Florence:
She'd need be a good horsewoman, and sit fast,
Whom my strong argument could not fling at last.
Prithee take courage, man; though I should counsel
Another to despair, yet I am pitiful
To thy afflictions, and will venture hard—
I will not name for what, it is not handsome;
Find you the proof, and praise me.

Hip. Then I fear me,
I shall not praise you in haste.

Liv. This is the comfort,
You are not the first, brother, has attempted
Things more forbidden, than this seems to be:

I'll minister all cordials now to you,
Because I'll cheer you up, sir.

Hip. I am past hope.

Liv. Love, thou shalt see me do a strange cure then,
As e'er was wrought on a disease so mortal,
And near akin to shame: when shall you see her?

Hip. Never in comfort more.

Liv. You're so impatient too.

Hip. Will you believe? Death! she's forsworn my company,
And seal'd it with a blush.

Liv. So, I perceive
All lies upon my hands then; well, the more glory
When the work's finish'd. How now, sir, the news?

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam, your niece, the virtuous Isabella,
Is lighted now to see you.

Liv. That's great fortune,
Sir, your stars bless you: Simple! lead her in.
[*Exit Servant.*

Hip. What's this to me?

Liv. Your absence, gentle brother,
I must bestir my wits for you.

Hip. Ay, to great purpose. [*Exit Hippolito.*

Liv. Beshrew you! would I lov'd you not so well!
I'll go to bed, and leave this deed undone:
I am the fondest where I once affect;
The carefull'st of their healths, and of their ease, forsooth,
That I look still but slenderly to mine own.

I take a course to pity him so much now,
That I have none left for modesty and myself.
This 'tis to grow so liberal; you've few sisters
That love their brother's case 'bove their own honesties:
But if you question my affections,
That will be found my fault. *(Enter* ISABELLA.*)*
Niece, your love's welcome.
Alas, what draws that paleness to thy cheeks,
This enforc'd marriage towards?

Isab. It helps, good aunt,
Amongst some other griefs; but those I'll keep
Lock'd up in modest silence; for they're sorrows
Would shame the tongue, more than they grieve the thought.

Liv. Indeed the Ward is simple.

Isab. Simple! that were well:
Why one might make good shift with such a husband,
But he's a fool entail'd, he halts downright in't.

Liv. And knowing this, I hope 'tis at your choice
To take or refuse, niece.

Isab. You see it is not.
I loath him more than beauty can hate death,
Or age her spiteful neighbour.

Liv. Let 't appear then.

Isab. How can I, being born with that obedience,
That must submit under a father's will?
If he command, I must of force consent.

Liv. Alas, poor soul! be not offended, prithee,
If I set by the name of niece awhile,
And bring in pity in a stranger fashion:
It lies here in this breast, would cross this match.

Isab. How! cross it, aunt?
Liv. Ay, and give thee more liberty
Than thou hast reason yet to apprehend.
Isab. Sweet aunt, in goodness keep not hid from me
What may befriend my life.
Liv. Yes, yes, I must
When I return to reputation,
And think upon the solemn vow I made
To your dead mother, my most loving sister;
As long as I've her memory 'twixt mine eyelids
Look for no pity now.
Isab. Kind, sweet, dear aunt——
Liv. No, 'twas a secret, I have took special care of,
Delivered by your mother on her death bed,
That's nine years now, and I'll not part from 't yet,
Though ne'er was fitter time, nor greater cause for't.
Isab. As you desire the praises of a virgin——
Liv. Good sorrow! I would do thee any kindness,
Not wronging secresy or reputation.
Isab. Neither of which (as I have hope of fruitfulness)
Shall receive wrong from me.
Liv. Nay, 'twould be your own wrong,
As much as any's, should it come to that once.
Isab. I need no better means to work persuasion then.
Liv. Let it suffice, you may refuse this fool,
Or you may take him, as you see occasion
For your advantage; the best wits will do't;
You've liberty enough in your own will,
You cannot be enforc'd; there grows the flow'r,

(If you could pick it out), makes whole life sweet
to you.
That which you call your father's command 's no-
thing;
Then your obedience must needs be as little.
If you can make shift here to taste your happiness,
Or pick out ought that likes you, much good do
you:
You see your cheer, I'll make you no set dinner.
Isab. And trust me, I may starve for all the good
I can find yet in this. Sweet aunt, deal plainlier.
Liv. Say, I should trust you now upon an oath,
And give you in a secret that would start you,
How am I sure of you in faith and silence?
Isab. Equal assurance may I find in mercy,
As you for that in me.
Liv. It shall suffice.
Then know, however custom has made good
For reputation's sake, the names of niece
And aunt, 'twixt you and I, we're nothing less.
Isab. How's that?
Liv. I told you I should start your blood:
You are no more ally'd to any of us,
(Save what the courtesy of opinion casts
Upon your mother's memory, and your name),
Than the merest stranger is, or one begot
At Naples, when the husband lies at Rome;
There's so much odds betwixt us. Since your
knowledge
Wish'd more instruction, and I have your oath
In pledge for silence, it makes me talk the freelier.
Did never the report of that fam'd Spaniard,
Marquiss of Coria, since your time was ripe
For understanding, fill your ear with wonder?

Isab. Yes; what of him? I have heard his deeds of honour
Often related when we liv'd in Naples.
Liv. You heard the praises of your father then.
Isab. My father!
Liv. That was he: but all the business
So carefully and so discreetly carried,
That fame receiv'd no spot by't; not a blemish;
Your mother was so wary to her end,
None knew it but her conscience and her friend,
Till penitent confession made it mine,
And now my pity, yours: it had been long else,
And I hope care and love alike in you,
Made good by oath, will see it take no wrong now:
How weak his commands now, whom you call father;
How vain all his enforcements, your obedience;
And what a largeness in your will and liberty,
To take, or to reject, or to do both;
For fools will serve to father wise mens' children:
All this you've time to think on. Oh, my wench!
Nothing o'erthrows our sex but indiscretion;
We might do well else of a brittle people,
As any under the great canopy:
I pray forget not but to call me aunt still;
Take heed of that; it may be mark'd in time else;
But keep your thoughts to yourself, from all the world,
Kind'red, or dearest friend; nay, I entreat you,
From him that all this while you have call'd uncle;
And though you love him dearly, as I know
His deserts claim as much e'en from a stranger,
Yet let not him know this; I prithee do not;
As ever thou hast hope of second pity,
If thou shouldst stand in need on't, do not do't.

Isab. Believe my oath, I will not.

Liv. Why, well said:

(Aside.) Who shows more craft t' undo a maidenhead,

I'll resign my part to her. *(To Hip. as he is entering.)* She's thine own; go.

Enter HIPPOLITO.

Hip. (To Liv.) Alas, fair flattery cannot cure my sorrows! [*Exit Livia.*

Isab. (Aside.) Have I past so much time in ignorance,

And never had the means to know myself
Till this bless'd hour? thanks to her virtuous pity
That brought it now to light; would I had known it
But one day sooner, he had then receiv'd
In favours, what (poor gentleman) he took
In bitter words; a slight and harsh reward
For one of his deserts.

Hip. (Aside.) There seems to me now
More anger and distraction in her looks:
I'm gone, I'll not endure a second storm;
The memory of the first is not pass'd yet.

Isab. (Aside.) Are you return'd, you comforts of my life?

In this man's presence, I will keep you fast now,
And sooner part eternally from the world,
Than my good joys in you. *(To Hip.)* Prithee forgive me,

I did but chide in jest; the best loves use it
Sometimes; it sets an edge upon affection.
When we invite our best friends to a feast,
'Tis not all sweetmeats that we set before them;
There's somewhat sharp and salt, both to whet appetite,

And make 'em taste their wine well: so, methinks,
After a friendly, sharp, and savory chiding,
A kiss tastes wondrous well, and full o' th' grape:
How think'st thou, does 't not? [*Kisses him.*

Hip. 'Tis so excellent,
I know not how to praise it, what to say to't.

Isab. This marriage shall go forward.

Hip. With the Ward?
Are you in earnest?

Isab. 'Twould be ill for us else.

Hip. *(Aside.)* For us! how means she that?

Isab. Troth, I begin
To be so well methinks, within this hour,
For all this match, able to kill one's heart;
Nothing can pull me down now; should my father
Provide a worse fool yet (which I should think
Were a hard thing to compass) I'd have him either,
The worse the better; none can come amiss now,
If he want wit enough: so discretion love me,
Desert and judgment, I have content sufficient!
She that comes once to be a housekeeper,
Must not look every day to fare well, sir,
Like a young waiting-gentlewoman in service,
For she feeds commonly as her lady does;
No good bit passes her, but she gets a taste on't:
But when she comes to keep house for herself,
She's glad of some choice cates then once a week,
Or twice at most, and glad if she can get 'em:
So must affection learn to fare with thankfulness.
Pray make your love no stranger, sir, that's all,
(Aside.) Though you be one yourself, and know
not on't;
And I have sworn you must not. [*Exit.*

Hip. This is beyond me!

Never came joys so unexpectedly
To meet desires in man! how came she thus?
What has she done to her, can any tell?
'Tis beyond sorcery this, drugs, or love-powders;
Some art that has no name sure; strange to me
Of all the wonders I e'er met withal
Throughout my ten years travels; but I'm thankful for't.
This marriage now must of necessity forward;
It is the only veil wit can devise
To keep our acts hid from sin-piercing eyes.
[*Exit.*

Scene II.

LIVIA'S *House. A Chess Board is set out. Enter* GUARDIANO *and* LIVIA.

Liv. How, sir, a gentlewoman so young, so fair,
As you set forth, spy'd from the widow's window?
Guard. She!
Liv. Our Sunday-dinner woman?
Guard. And Thursday supper-woman; the same still.
I know not how she came by her, but I'll swear
She's the prime gallant for a face in Florence;
And no doubt other parts follow their leader.
The Duke himself first spy'd her at the window;
Then in a rapture (as if admiration
Were poor when it were single) beck'ned me,
And pointed to the wonder warily,
As one that fear'd she would draw in her splendour
Too soon, if too much gaz'd at: I ne'er knew him
So infinitely taken with a woman;

Nor can I blame his appetite, or tax
His raptures of slight folly; she's a creature
Able to draw a state from serious business,
And make it their best piece to do her service.
What course shall we devise? 'has spoke twice now.

Liv. Twice?

Guard. 'Tis beyond your apprehension,
How strangely that one look has catch'd his heart:
'Twould prove but too much worth in wealth and favour
To those should work his peace.

Liv. And if I do't not,
Or at least come as near it (if your art
Will take a little pains and second me)
As any wench in Florence of my standing,
I'll quite give o'er, and shut up shop in cunning.

Guard. 'Tis for the Duke; and if I fail your purpose
All means to come by riches or advancement,
Miss me, and skip me over.

Liv. Let the old woman then
Be sent for with all speed, then I'll begin.

Guard. A good conclusion follow, and a sweet one,
After this stale beginning with old ware.
Within there!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, do you call?

Guard. Come near, list hither. [*Whispers.*

Liv. I long myself to see this absolute creature,
That wins the heart of love, and praise so much.

Guard. Go, sir, make haste.

Liv. Say I entreat her company:
Do you hear, sir?
Serv. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*
Liv. That brings her quickly.
Guard. I would 'twere done; the Duke waits the good hour,
And I wait the good fortune that may spring from't.
I have had a lucky hand these fifteen year
At such court passage* with three dice in a dish.
Signior Fabritio!

Enter FABRITIO.

Fab. Oh, sir, I bring an alteration in my mouth now.
Guard. An alteration! *(Aside.)* No wise speech, I hope;
He means not to talk wisely, does he trow?
Good! what's the change, I pray, sir?
Fab. A new change.
Guard. Another yet! faith there's enough already.
Fab. My daughter loves him now.
Guard. What does she, sir?
Fab. Affects him beyond thought: who but the Ward forsooth!
No talk but of the Ward! she would have him
To choose 'bove all the men she ever saw!
My will goes not so fast as her consent now;
Her duty gets before my command still.

* *Passage* was a very common game in our poet's time. "It is a game at dice to be played at but by two, and it is performed with three dice. The caster throws continually till he hath thrown dubblets under ten, and then he is out and loseth; or dubblets above ten, and then he *passeth* and wins."
COMPLETE GAMESTER.

Guard. Why then, sir, if you'll have me speak my thoughts,
I smell 'twill be a match.

Fab. Ay, and a sweet young couple,
If I have any judgment.

Guard. (Aside.) Faith that's little:
Let her be sent to-morrow, before noon,
And handsomely trick'd up; for 'bout that time
I mean to bring her in, and tender her to him.

Fab. I warrant you for handsome; I will see
Her things laid ready, every one in order,
And have some part of her trick'd up to-night.

Guard. Why, well said.

Fab. 'Twas a use her mother had;
When she was invited to an early wedding,
She'd dress her head o'er night, spunge up herself,
And give her neck three lathers.

Guard. (Aside.) Ne'er a halter?

Fab. On with her chain of pearl, her ruby bracelets,
Lay ready all her tricks and jigembobs.

Guard. So must your daughter.

Fab. I'll about it straight, sir. [*Exit Fab.*

Liv. How he sweats in the foolish zeal of fatherhood,
After six ounces an hour, and seems
To toil as much as if his cares were wise ones!

Guard. You've let his folly blood in the right vein, lady.

Liv. And here cómes his sweet son-in-law that shall be;
They're both ally'd in wit before the marriage;
What will they be hereafter when they are nearer?
Yet they can go no further than the fool;
There's the world's end in both of 'em.

Enter WARD *and* SORDIDO, *one with a Shittlecock, the other a Battledoor.*

Guard. Now, young heir.

Ward. What's the next business after shittlecock, now?

Guard. To-morrow you shall see the gentlewoman
Must be your wife.

Ward. There's e'en another thing too
Must be kept up with a pair of battledoors.
My wife! what can she do?

Guard. Nay, that's a question you should ask yourself, Ward,
When you're alone together.

Ward. That's as I list:
A wife's to be ask'd any where, I hope:
I'll ask her in a congregation, if I have a mind to't, and so save a licence: my guardiner has no more wit than an herb-woman, that sells away all her sweet herbs and nosegays, and keeps a stinking breath for her own pottage.

Sord. Let me be at the choosing of your beloved,
If you desire a woman of good parts.

Ward. Thou shalt, sweet Sordido.

Sord. I have a plaguy guess; let me alone to see what she is; if I but look upon her—'way! I know all the faults to a hair, that you may refuse her for.

Ward. Dost thou? I prithee let me here 'em, Sordido.

Sord. Well, mark 'em then: I have 'em all in rhyme.

The wife your guardiner ought to tender,
Should be pretty, straight and slender;
Her hair not short, her foot not long,
Her hand not huge, nor too too loud her tongue:
No pearl in eye, nor ruby in her nose;
No burn or cut, but what the catalogue shows.
She must have teeth, and that no black ones,
And kiss most sweet when she does smack once:
Her skin must be both white and plump;
Her body straight, not hopper-rump'd,
Or wriggle sideways like a crab:
She must be neither slut nor drab,
Nor go too splay-foot with her shoes,
To make her smock lick up the dews:
And two things more, which I forgot to tell ye,
She neither must have bump in back, nor belly.
These are the faults that will not make her pass.

Ward. And if I spy not these, I am a rank ass.

Sord. Nay more; by right, sir, you should see her naked;
For that's the ancient order.

Ward. See her naked?
That were good sport, i'faith: I'll have the books turn'd over;
And if I find her naked on record*,
She shall not have a rag on: but stay, stay,
How if she should desire to see me so too?
I were in a sweet case then; such a foul skin.

Sord. But you've a clean shirt, and that makes amends, sir.

Ward. I will not see her naked for that trick though. [*Exit.*

* *i. e.* If I discover there, that it is the custom for ladies to be so seen previously to marriage.

Sord. Then take her with all faults with her clothes on!
And they may hide a number with a bum-roll.
'Faith, choosing of a wench in a huge farthingale,
Is like the buying of ware under a great penthouse;
What with the deceit of one,
And the false light of th' other, mark my speeches,
He may have a diseas'd wench in's bed,
And rotten stuff in's breeches. [*Exit.*

Guard. It may take handsomely.

[*Guard. goes out and returns almost immediately.*

Liv. I see small hind'rance.
How now! so soon return'd?

Enter MOTHER.

Guard. She's come.

Liv. That's well.
Widow, come, come, I have a great quarrel to you:
Faith I must chide you, that you must be sent for.
You make yourself so strange, never come at us;
And yet so near a neighbour, and so unkind:
Troth, you're to blame; you cannot be more welcome
To any house in Florence, that I'll tell you.

Moth. My thanks must needs acknowledge so much, madam.

Liv. How can you be so strange then? I sit here
Sometimes whole days together without company,
When business draws this gentleman from home;
And should be happy in society,
Which I so well affect, as that of yours.
I know you're alone too; why should not we,

Like two kind neighbours, then, supply the wants
Of one another, having tongue discourse,
Experience in the world, and such kind helps
To laugh down time, and meet age merrily *?
Moth. Age, madam, you speak mirth; 'tis at my door,
But a long journey from your ladyship yet.
Liv. My faith, I'm nine-and-thirty; ev'ry stroke, wench;
And 'tis a general observation
'Mongst knights, wives or widows, we account ourselves
Then old, when young mens' eyes leave looking at's:
'Tis a true rule amongst us, and ne'er fail'd yet
In any but in one, that I remember;
Indeed *she* had a friend at nine-and-forty;
Marry, she paid well for him; and in th' end
He kept a quean or two with her own money,
That robb'd her of her plate, and cut her throat.
Moth. She had her punishment in this world, madam,
And a fair warning to all other women,
That they live chaste at fifty.
Liv. Ay, or never, wench.
Come, now I have thy company I'll not part with't
Till after supper.
Moth. Yes, I must crave pardon, madam.
Liv. I swear you shall stay supper; we have no strangers, woman;
None but my sojourners and I; this gentleman
And the young heir, his ward; you know our company.

* "Meerly" is the reading of the original.

Moth. Some other time I will make bold with you, madam.

Guard. Nay, pray stay, widow.

Liv. Faith, she shall not go:
Do you think I'll be forsworn?

Moth. 'Tis a great while
Till supper time; I'll take my leave then now, madam,
And come again i' th' evening, since your ladyship
Will have it so.

Liv. I' th' evening? by my troth, wench,
I'll keep you while I have you; you have great business sure
To sit alone at home: I wonder strangely
What pleasure you take in't! were 't to me now
I should be ever at one neighbour's house
Or other all day long; having no charge,
Or none to chide you, if you go or stay,
Who may live merrier, ay, or more at heart's ease?
Come, we'll to chess, or draughts; there are an hundred tricks
To drive out time till supper, never fear't, wench.

Moth. I'll but make one step home, and return straight, madam.

Liv. Come, I'll not trust you; you use more excuses
To your kind friends than ever I knew any.
What business can you have, if you be sure
You've lock'd the doors? and, that being all you have,
I know you're careful on't: one afternoon
So much to spend here! say I should entreat you now

To lie a night or two, or a week, with me,
Or leave you own house for a month together;
It were a kindness that long neighbourhood
And friendship might well hope to prevail in:
Would you deny such a request, i'faith?
Speak truth, and freely.

Moth. I were then uncivil, madam.

Liv. Go to then, set your men; *(pointing to the chess-board.)* we'll have whole nights
Of mirth together, ere we be much older, wench.

Moth. *(Aside.)* As good now, tell her then, for she will know't;
I have always found her a most friendly lady.

Liv. Why, widow, where's your mind?

Moth. Troth, e'en at home, madam.
To tell you truth, I left a gentlewoman
E'en sitting all alone, which is uncomfortable,
Especially to young bloods.

Liv. Another excuse.

Moth. No; as I hope for health, madam, that's a truth;
Please you to send and see.

Liv. What gentlewoman? pish!

Moth. Wife to my son, indeed; but not known, madam,
To any but yourself.

Liv. Now I beshrew you:
Could you be so unkind to her and me,
To come and not bring her? Faith, 'tis not friendly.

Moth. I fear'd to be too bold.

Liv. Too bold! Oh, what's become
Of the true hearty love was wont to be
'Mongst neighbours in old time?

Moth. And she's a stranger, madam.

Liv. The more should be her welcome: when is courtesy
In better practice, than when 'tis employ'd
In entertaining strangers? I could chide, i'faith!
Leave her behind, poor gentlewoman! alone too!
Make some amends, and send for her betimes; go.

Moth. Please you command one of your servants, madam.

Liv. Within there!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Madam.

Liv. Attend the gentlewoman.

Moth. (Aside.) It must be carried wondrous privately
From my son's knowledge, he'll break out in storms else.
Hark you, sir. [*Whispers the Servant.*

Liv. (Aside to Guard.) Now comes in the heat of your part.

Guard. True, I know it, lady; and if I be out,
May the Duke banish me from all employments,
Wanton, or serious.

Liv. So; have you sent, widow?

Moth. Yes, madam, he's almost at home by this.

Liv. And 'faith let me entreat you, that hence forward
All such unkind faults may be swept from friendship,
Which does but dim the lustre; and think thus much,
It is a wrong to me, that have ability
To bid friends welcome, when you keep 'em from me;

You cannot set greater dishonour near me;
For bounty is the credit and the glory
Of those that have enough: I see you're sorry,
And the good 'mends is made by't.

Moth. Here's she 's, madam.

Enter BRANCHA *and* SERVANT.

Bran. (Aside.) I wonder how she comes to send for me now?

Liv. Gentlewoman, you're most welcome, trust me you are,
As courtesy can make one, or respect
Due to the presence of you.

Bran. I give you thanks, lady.

Liv. I heard you were alone, and 't had appear'd
An ill condition in me, though I knew you not,
Nor ever saw you, (yet humanity
Thinks ev'ry case her own) to have kept your company
Here from you, and left you all solitary:
I rather ventur'd upon boldness then,
As the least fault, and wish'd your presence here;
A thing most happily motion'd of that gentleman,
Whom I request you, for his care and pity,
To honour and reward with your acquaintance,
A gentleman that ladies' rights stands for;
That's his profession.

Bran. 'Tis a noble one, and honours my acquaintance.

Guard. All my intentions are servants to such mistresses.

Bran. 'Tis your modesty,
It seems, that makes your deserts speak so low, sir.

Liv. Come, widow: *(to Bran.)* look you, lady,
here's our business;
[Pointing to the chess-board.
Are we not well employ'd, think you? an old quarrel
Between us, that will never be at an end.
Bran. No? and methinks there's men enough to part you, lady.
Liv. Ho! but they set us on, let us come off
As well as we can, poor souls, men care no farther.
I pray sit down, forsooth, if you have the patience
To look upon two weak and tedious gamesters.
Guard. Faith, madam, set these by till evening,
You'll have enough on't then; the gentlewoman,
Being a stranger, would take more delight
To see your rooms and pictures.
Liv. Marry, good sir,
And well remember'd; I beseech you show 'em her;
That will beguile time well; pray heartily do, sir,
I'll do as much for you: here, take these keys;
Shew her the monument too; and that's a thing
Every one sees not; you can witness that, widow.
Moth. And that's worth sight indeed, madam.
Bran. Kind lady,
I fear I came to be a trouble to you.
Liv. Oh, nothing less, forsooth.
Bran. And to this courteous gentleman,
That wears a kindness in his breast so noble
And bounteous to the welcome of a stranger.
Guard. If you but give acceptance to my service,
You do the greatest grace and honour to me
That courtesy can merit.
Bran. I were to blame else,
And out of fashion much. I pray you lead, sir.

Liv. After a game or two we're for you, gentlefolks.

Guard. We wish no better seconds in society
Than your discourses, madam, and your partner's there.

Moth. I thank your praise, I listen'd to you, sir;
Though when you spoke, there came a paltry rook
Full in my way, and chok'd up all my game.
[*Exit Guard. and Bran.*

Liv. Alas, poor widow, I shall be too hard for thee.

Moth. You're cunning at the game, I'll be sworn, madam.

Liv. It will be found so ere I give you over:
She that can place her man well——

Moth. As you do, madam.

Liv. As I shall, wench, can never lose her game:
Nay, nay, the black king's mine.

Moth. Cry you mercy, madam!

Liv. And this my queen.

Moth. I see't now.

Liv. Here's a duke*
Will strike a sure stroke for the game anon;
Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself.

Moth. I know that, madam.

* It appears from the following passage in our poet's "Game of Chess," that the pieces now called *rooks*, were sometimes formerly called *dukes*.

Error. There's the full number of the game;
Kings and their pawns, queens, bishops,
Knights, and *dukes*.
Ign. *Dukes? they're called rookes by some.*
Error. Corruptively;
Le Roch the word, *Custodié de la Roch*,
The Keeper of the Forts.

Liv. You play well the whilst:
How she belies her skill! I hold two ducats,
I give you check and mate to your white king,
Simplicity itself, your saintish king there.
Moth. Well, ere now, lady,
I have seen the fall of subtlety: jest on.
Liv. Ay, but simplicities receives two for one.
Moth. What remedy but patience!

Enter GUARDIANO *and* BRANCHA *in a Gallery above.*

Bran. Trust me, sir,
Mine eye ne'er met with fairer ornaments.
Guard Nay, livelier, I'm persuaded, neither Florence
Nor Venice can produce.
Bran. Sir, my opinion
Takes your part highly.
Guard. There's a better piece
Yet than all these. [*Duke discovered.*
Bran. Not possible, sir!
Guard. Believe it
You'll say so when you see't: turn but your eye now
You're upon't presently. [*Exit.*
Bran. Oh, sir!
Duke. He's gone, beauty.
Pish! look not after him: he's but a vapour,
That when the sun appears is seen no more.
[*He takes hold of her.*
Bran. Oh, treachery to honour!
Duke. Prithee tremble not:
I feel thy breast shake like a turtle panting

Under a loving hand that makes much on't.
Why art so fearful? as I'm friend to brightness,
There's nothing but respect and honour near thee:
You know me, you have seen me; here's a heart
Can witness I have seen thee.

Bran. The more's my danger.

Duke. The more's thy happiness. Pish! strive not, sweet;

[*She struggles to get from him.*

This strength were excellent employ'd in love now;
But here 'tis spent amiss: strive not to seek
Thy liberty, and keep me still in prison:
I'faith you shall not out, till I'm releas'd now;
We'll be both freed together, or stay still by't;
So is captivity pleasant.

Bran. Oh, my lord!

Duke. I am not here in vain; have but the leisure
To think on that, and thou'lt be soon resolv'd:
The lifting of thy voice is but like one
That does exalt his enemy; who proving high,
Lays all the plots to confound him that rais'd him.
Take warning, I beseech thee: thou seem'st to me
A creature so compos'd of gentleness,
And delicate meekness; such as bless the faces
Of figures that are drawn for goddesses,
And makes art proud to look upon her work:
I should be sorry the least force should lay
An unkind touch upon thee.

Bran. Oh, my extremity!
My lord, what seek you?

Duke. Love.

Bran. 'Tis gone already;
I have a husband.

Duke. That's a single comfort;
Take a friend to him.
Bran. That's a double mischief,
Or else there's no religion.
Duke. Do not tremble
At fears of thine own making.
Bran. Nor, great lord,
Make me not bold with death and deeds of ruin,
Because they fear not you: me they must fright;
Then am I best in health; should thunder speak,
And none regard it, it had lost the name,
And were as good be still. I'm not like those
That take their soundest sleeps in greatest tempests;
Then wake I most, the weather fearfullest,
And call for strength to virtue.
Duke. Sure I think
Thou know'st the way to please me. I affect
A passionate pleading 'bove an easy yielding;
But never pitied any, they deserve none
That will not pity me: I can command;
Think upon that: yet if thou truly knewest
The infinite pleasure my affection takes
In gentle, fair entreatings, when love's businesses
Are carried courteously 'twixt heart and heart,
You'd make more haste to please me.
Bran. Why should you seek, sir,
To take away that you cannot give?
Duke. But I give better in exchange; wealth, honour:
She that is fortunate in a duke's favour,
'Lights on a tree that bears all womens' wishes:
If your own mother saw you pluck fruit there,
She would commend your wit, and praise the time

Of your nativity: take hold of glory.
Do not I know you've cast away your life
Upon necessities, means merely doubtful
To keep you in indifferent health and fashion,
(A thing I heard too lately, and soon pitied!)
And can you be so much your beauty's enemy,
To kiss away a month or two in wedlock,
And weep whole years in wants for ever after?
Come, play the wise wench, and provide for ever:
Let storms come when they list, they find thee shelter'd.
Should any doubt arise, let nothing trouble thee;
Put trust in our love for the managing
Of all to thy heart's peace. We'll walk together,
And show a thankful joy for both our fortunes.
[*Exit above.*

Liv. Did not I say my duke would fetch you over, widow*?

Moth. I think you spoke in earnest when you said it, madam.

Liv. And my black king makes all the haste he can too.

Moth. Well, madam, we may meet with him in time yet.

Liv. I have given thee blind mate twice.

Moth. You may see, madam,
My eyes begin to fail.

Liv. I'll swear they do, wench.

* It appears that what passed between the Duke and Branchs was all seen by Livia; and as the resistance of the latter seems to have been sincere, it cannot but seem strange that her opposition should not be such as to alarm her mother-in-law; but our poet, like many of his contemporaries, has crowded too many material incidents into his piece to render all of them probable and consistent.

Enter GUARDIANO.

Guard. (Aside.) I can but smile as often as I think on't!
How prettily the poor fool was beguil'd;
How unexpectedly: it's a witty age!
Never were finer snares for womens' honesties
Than are devis'd in these days; no spider's web's
Made of a daintier thread, than are now practis'd
To catch love's flesh-fly by the silver wing:
Yet, to prepare her stomach by degrees
To Cupid's feast, because I saw 'twas quezy,
I show'd her naked pictures by the way;
A bit to stay the appetite. Well, advancement,
I venture hard to find thee: if thou com'st
With a greater title set upon thy crest,
I'll take that first cross patiently, and wait
Until some other comes greater than that:
I'll endure all.

Liv. The game's e'en at the best now: you may see, widow,
How all things draw to an end.

Moth. E'en so do I, madam.

Liv. I pray take some of your neighbours along with you.

Moth. They must be those are almost twice your years then,
If they be chose fit matches for my time, madam.

Liv. Has not my Duke bestir'd himself?

Moth. Yes faith, madam; 'has done me all the mischief in this game.

Liv. 'Has shew'd himself in's kind.

Moth. In's kind, call you it?
I may swear that.

Liv. Yes, faith, and keep your oath.

Guard. (Aside.) Hark! list! there's somebody coming down: 'tis she.

Enter BRANCHA.

Bran. (Aside.) Now bless me from a blasting! I saw that now,
Fearful for any woman's eye to look on;
Infectious mists and mill-dews hang at's eyes;
The weather of a doomsday dwells upon him.
Yet since mine honour's leprous, why should I
Preserve that fair that caus'd the leprosy?
Come, poison all at once. *(To Guard.)* Thou, in whose baseness
The bane of virtue broods, I'm bound in soul
Eternally to curse thy smooth-brow'd treachery,
That wore the fair veil of a friendly welcome,
And I a stranger; think upon't, 'tis worth it;
Murders pil'd up upon a guilty spirit,
At his last breath will not lie heavier
Than this betraying act upon thy conscience:
Beware of off'ring the first-fruits to sin:
His weight is deadly who commits with strumpets,
After they have been abas'd, and made for use;
If *they* offend to th' death, as wise men know,
How much more they than that first make 'em so:
I give thee that to feed on: I'm made bold now,
I thank thy treachery; sin and I'm acquainted,
No couple greater; and I'm like that great one,
Who making politic use of a base villain,
He likes the treason well, but hates the traitor;
So I hate thee, slave!

Guard. Well, so the Duke love me,
I fare not much amiss then; two great feasts

Do seldom come together in one day;
We must not look for 'em.

Bran. What, at it still, mother?

Moth. You see we sit by't: are you so soon return'd?

Liv. (Aside.) So lively, and so cheerful; a good sign that.

Moth. You have not seen all since, sure?

Bran. That have I, mother,
The monument and all: I'm so beholding
To this kind, honest, courteous gentleman,
You'd little think it, mother; show'd me all;
Had me from place to place so fashionably;
The kindness of some people, how 't exceeds!
'Faith, I have seen that I little thought to see,
I' th' morning when I rose.

Moth. Nay, so I told you
Before you saw't, it would prove worth your sight.
I give you great thanks for my daughter, sir,
And all your kindness towards her.

Guard. Oh! good widow,
Much good may do her; *(aside)* forty weeks hence, i'faith.

Enter SERVANT.

Liv. Now, sir.

Serv. May't please you, madam, to walk in;
Supper's upon the table.

Liv. Yes, we come:
Will't please you, gentlewoman?

Bran. Thanks, virtuous lady;
(Aside to Liv.) You're a damn'd bawd—I'll follow you forsooth;

Pray take my mother in; *(aside)*, an old ass go with you;—
This gentleman and I vow not to part.
Liv. Then get you both before.
Bran. There lies his art. [*Exeunt.*
Liv. Widow, I'll follow you. Is't so! *damn'd bawd!*
Are you so bitter? 'Tis but want of use:
Her tender modesty is sea-sick a little,
Being not accustom'd to the breaking billow
Of woman's wavering faith, blown with temptations.
'Tis but a qualm of honour, 'twill away;
A little bitter for the time, but lasts not.
Sin tastes at the first draught like wormwood water;
But drunk again, 'tis nectar ever after. [*Exit.*

ACT III. Scene I.

Enter Mother.

Moth. I would my son would either keep at home,
Or I were in my grave!
She was but one day abroad, but ever since
She's grown so cutted *, there's no speaking to her:
Whether the sight of great cheer at my lady's,
And such mean fare at home, work discontent in her,
I know not; but I'm sure she's strangely alter'd.
I'll ne'er keep daughter-in-law i' th' house with me
Again, if I had an hundred. When read I of any
That agreed long together? but she and her mother
Fell out in the first quarter; nay, sometime
A grudging of a scolding the first week, by'r lady!
So takes the new disease methinks in my house;
I'm weary of my part; there's nothing likes her †;
I know not how to please her here o' late:
And here she comes.

Enter Brancha.

Bran. This is the strangest house
For all defects as ever gentlewoman
Made shift withal, to pass away her love in.
Why is there not a cushion-cloth of drawn work,

* "*Cutted*"—cross, querulous. † *i. e.* Pleases her.

Or some fair cut-work pin'd up in my bed-chamber?
A silver and gilt casting bottle* hung by't?
Nay, since I am content to be so kind to you,
To spare you for a silver bason and ewer,
Which one of my fashion looks for of duty;
She's never offered under where she sleeps.

Moth. She talks of things here my whole 'state's not worth.

Bran. Never a green silk quilt is there i' th' house, mother,
To cast upon my bed?

Moth. No, by troth, is there;
Nor orange tawny neither.

Bran. Here's a house
For a young gentlewoman to be got with child in.

Moth. Yes, simple though you make it, there has been three
Got in a year in't, since you move me to't,
And all as sweet-fac'd children, and as lovely
As you'll be mother of; I will not spare you!
What, cannot children be begot, think you,
Without gilt casting bottles? yes, and as sweet ones.
The miller's daughter brings forth as white boys,
As she that bathes herself with milk and bean flower.
'Tis an old saying, *One may keep good cheer*
In a mean house; so may true love affect
After the rate of princes in a cottage.

Bran. Troth, you speak wondrous well for your old house here:

* The stage direction in "Antonio and Mellida," vol. ii. p. 150, sufficiently explains the nature of these "casting bottles."

'Twill shortly fall down at your feet to thank you,
Or stoop, when you go to bed, like a good child,
To ask you blessing. Must I live in want,
Because my fortune match'd me with your son?
Wives do not give away themselves to husbands,
To the end to be quite cast away; they look
To be the better us'd, and tender'd rather,
Highlier respected, and maintain'd the richer;
They're well rewarded else for the free gift
Of their whole life to a husband. I ask less now
Then what I had at home when I was a maid,
And at my father's house, kept short of that
Which a wife knows she must have, nay, and will;
Will, mother, if she be not a fool born;
And report went of me, that I could wrangle
For what I wanted when I was two hours old;
And by that copy, this land still I hold*.
You hear me, mother. [*Exit.*

Moth. Ay, too plain, methinks;
And were I somewhat deafer when you spake,
'Twere ne'er a whit the worse for my quietness:
'Tis the most sudden'st, strangest alteration,
And the most subtlest that e'er wit at threescore
Was puzzled to find out: I know no cause for't, but
She's no more like the gentlewoman at first,
Than I am like her that ne'er lay with man yet;
And she's a very young thing where'er she be:
When she first 'lighted here, I told her then
How mean she should find all things; she was pleas'd, forsooth,
None better: I laid open all defects to her,
She was contented still; but the devil's in her,
Nothing contents her now. To night my son

* *i. e.* I can only preserve my rank and privileges by being able to contend for them.

Promis'd to be at home; would he were come once,
For I'm weary of my charge, and life too:
She'd be serv'd all in silver by her good will,
By night and day; she hates the name of pewterer,
More than sick men the noise, or diseas'd bones
That quake at fall o' th' hammer, seeming to have
A fellow-feeling with 't at every blow.
What course shall I think on? she frets me so *.
[*Exit.*

Enter LEANTIO.

Lean. How near am I now to a happiness
That earth exceeds not! not another like it:
The treasures of the deep are not so precious,
As are the conceal'd comforts of a man
Lock'd up in woman's love. I scent the air
Of blessings when I come but near the house:
What a delicious breath marriage sends forth!
The violet-bed's not sweeter. Honest wedlock
Is like a banqueting-house built in a garden,
On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight
To cast their modest odours; when base lust,
With all her powders, paintings, and best pride,
Is but a fair house built by a ditch side.
When I behold a glorious dangerous strumpet,
Sparkling in beauty and destruction too,
Both at a twinkling, I do liken straight
Her beautify'd body to a goodly temple
That's built on vaults where carcasses lie rotting,
And so, by little and little, I shrink back again,
And quench desire with a cool meditation;

* I have removed the Mother from the stage during Leantio's speech, because Brancha is marked as having retired, and they both appear, without any stage direction, immediately that Leantio concludes.

And I'm as well methinks. Now for a welcome
Able to draw mens' envies upon man:
A kiss now that will hang upon my lip,
As sweet as morning dew upon a rose,
And full as long; after a five days fast
She'll be so greedy now, and cling about me;
I take care how I shall be rid of her;
And here't begins.

Enter BRANCHA *and* MOTHER.

Bran. Oh, sir, you're welcome home.
Moth. Oh, is he come? I am glad on't.
Lean. *(Aside.)* Is that all?
Why this is * dreadful now as sudden death
To some rich man, that flatters all his sins
With promise of repentance when he's old,
And dies in the midway before he comes to't.
Sure you're not well, Brancha! How dost, prithee?
Bran. I have been better than I am at this time.
Lean. Alas, I thought so.
Bran. Nay, I have been worse too,
Than now you see me, sir.
Lean. I'm glad thou mendst yet,
I feel my heart mend too. How came it to thee?
Has any thing dislik'd thee in my absence?
Bran. No, certain, I have had the best content
That Florence can afford.
Lean. Thou makest the best on't:
Speak, mother, what's the cause? you must needs know.

* "Why this? *as* dreadful now," &c. is the original.

Moth. Troth I know none, son; let her speak herself;
Unless it be the same 'gave Lucifer a tumbling cast; that's pride.
Bran. Methinks this house stands nothing to my mind;
I'd have some pleasant lodging i' th' high street, sir;
Or if 'twere near the court, sir, that were much better;
'Tis a sweet recreation for a gentlewoman
To stand in a bay-window, and see gallants.
Lean. Now I have another temper, a mere stranger
To that of yours, it seems; I should delight
To see none but yourself.
Bran. I praise not that;
Too fond is as unseemly as too churlish:
I would not have a husband of that proneness,
To kiss me before company, for a world:
Beside, 'tis tedious to see one thing still, sir,
Be it the best that ever heart affected;
Nay, were't yourself, whose love had power you know
To bring me from my friends, I would not stand thus,
And gaze upon you always; troth, I could not, sir;
As good be blind, and have no use of sight,
As look on one thing still: what's the eye's treasure,
But change of objects? You are learned, sir,
And know I speak not ill; 'tis* full as virtuous
For woman's eye to look on several men,
As for her heart, sir, to be fixed on one.

* The original reads, "*till* full as virtuous."

Lean. Now thou come'st home to me; a kiss for that word.

Bran. No matter for a kiss, sir; let it pass;
'Tis but a toy, we'll not so much as mind it;
Let's talk of other business, and forget it.
What news now of the pirates? any stirring?
Prithee discourse a little.

Moth. (Aside.) I am glad he's here yet
To see her tricks himself; I had lied monst'rously
If I had told 'em first.

Lean. Speak, what's the humour, sweet,
You make your lip so strange? this was not wont.

Bran. Is there no kindness betwixt man and wife,
Unless they make a pigeon-house of friendship,
And be still billing? 'tis the idlest fondness
That ever was invented; and 'tis pity
It's grown a fashion for poor gentlewomen;
There's many a disease kiss'd in a year by't,
And a French court'sy made to't: Alas, sir,
Think of the world, how we shall live, grow serious;
We have been married a whole fortnight now.

Lean. How? a whole fortnight! why, is that so long?

Bran. 'Tis time to leave off dalliance; 'tis a doctrine
Of your own teaching, if you be remember'd,
And I was bound to obey it.

Moth. (Aside.) Here's one fits him;
This was well catch'd i'faith, son, like a fellow
That rids another country of a plague,
And brings it home with him to his own house.
[*Knocking within.*
Who knocks?

Lean. Who's there now? Withdraw you, Brancha;
Thou art a gem no stranger's eye must see,
Howe'er thou pleas'd now to look dull on me.
[*Exit Brancha.*

Enter MESSENGER.

You're welcome, sir: to whom your business, pray?
Mess. To one I see not here now.
Lean. Who should that be, sir?
Mess. A young gentlewoman, I was sent to.
Lean. A young gentlewoman?
Mess. Ay, sir, about sixteen: why look you wildly, sir?
Lean. At your strange error: you've mistook the house, sir;
There's none such here, I assure you.
Mess. I assure you too,
The man that sent me cannot be mistook.
Lean. Why, who is't sent you, sir?
Mess. The Duke.
Lean. The Duke?
Mess. Yes, he entreats her company at a banquet
At Lady Livia's house.
Lean. Troth, shall I tell you, sir,
It is the most erroneous business
That e'er your honest pains was abus'd with:
I pray forgive me if I smile a little,
I cannot choose i'faith, sir, at an error
So comical as this, (I mean no harm though);
His grace has been most wondrous ill inform'd,
Pray so return it, sir. What should her name be?
Mess. That I shall tell you straight too,—
Brancha Capella.

Lean. How, sir! Brancha? What do you call th' other?

Mess. Capella. Sir, it seems you know no such then.

Lean. Who should this be? I never heard o' th' name.

Mess. Then 'tis a sure mistake.

Lean. What if you enquir'd
In the next street, sir? I saw gallants there
In the new houses that are built of late;
Ten to one, there you find her.

Mess. Nay, no matter,
I will return the mistake, and seek no further.

Lean. Use your own will and pleasure, sir, you're welcome. [*Exit Messenger.*
What shall I think of first! Come forth, Brancha,
Thou art betray'd, I fear me.

Enter BRANCHA.

Bran. Betray'd! how, sir?

Lean. The Duke knows thee.

Bran. Knows me! how know you that, sir?

Lean. Has got thy name.

Bran. (Aside.) Ay, and my good name too;
That's worse o' th' twain.

Lean. How comes this work about?

Bran. How should the Duke know me? can you guess, mother?

Moth. Not I with all my wits; sure we kept house close.

Lean. Kept close! not all the locks in Italy
Can keep you women so; you have been gadding,
And ventur'd out at twilight, to th' court green yonder,

And met the gallant bowlers coming home;
Without your masks too, both of you, I'll be
hang'd else:
Thou hast been seen, Brancha, by some stranger;
Never excuse it.
Bran. I'll not seek the way, sir:
Do you think you've married me to mew me up
Not to be seen? what would you make of me?
Lean. A good wife, nothing else.
Bran. Why, so are some
That are seen ev'ry day, else the devil take 'em.
Lean. No more, then! I believe all virtuous in
thee,
Without an argument; 'twas but thy hard chance
To be seen somewhere, there lies all the mischief;
But I have devis'd a riddance.
Moth. Now I can tell you, son,
The time and place.
Lean. When, where?
Moth. What wits have I!
When you last took your leave, if you remember,
You left us both at window.
Lean. Right, I know that.
Moth. And not the third part of an hour after
The Duke past by, in a great solemnity,
To St. Mark's Temple, and to my apprehension
He look'd up twice to th' window.
Lean. Oh, there quicken'd
The mischief of this hour!
Bran. (Aside.) If you call't mischief,
It is a thing I fear I am conceiv'd with.
Lean. Look'd he up twice, and could you take
no warning?

Moth. Why once may do as much harm, son,
as a thousand:
Do not you know one spark has fir'd an house,
As well as a whole furnace?
Lean. My heart flames for't;
Yet let's be wise, and keep all smother'd closely;
I have bethought a means: Is the door fast?
Moth. I lock'd it myself after him.
Lean. You know, mother,
At the end of the dark palour there's a place
So artificially contriv'd for a conveyance,
No search could ever find it; when my father
Kept in for manslaughter, it was his sanctuary;
There will I lock my life's best treasure up,
Brancha.
Bran. Would you keep me closer yet?
Have you the conscience? you're best e'en choak
me up, sir:
You make me fearful of your health and wits,
You cleave to such wild courses: what's the matter?
Lean. Why, are you so insensible of your danger
To ask that now? The Duke himself has sent for
you
To Lady Livia's, to a banquet, forsooth.
Bran. Now I beshrew you heartily, has he so!
And you the man would never yet vouchsafe
To tell me on't till now: you show your loyalty
And honesty at once; and so farewell, sir.
Lean. Brancha, whether now?
Bran. Why, to the Duke, sir:
You say he sent for me.
Lean. But thou dost not mean to go, I hope.
Bran. No? I shall prove unmannerly,
Rude, and uncivil, mad, and imitate you.

Come, mother, come, follow his humour no longer,
We shall be all executed for treason shortly.

Moth. Not I, i'faith! I'll first obey the Duke,
And taste of a good banquet; I'm of thy mind.
I'll step but up and fetch two handkerchiefs
To pocket up some sweetmeats, and o'ertake thee.
[*Exit.*

Bran. (*Aside.*) Why here's an old wench would trot into a bawd now
For some dry sucket, or a colt in March-pain*.
[*Exit.*

Lean. Oh, thou the ripe time of man's misery, wedlock,
When all his thoughts, like over-laden trees,
Crack with the fruits they bear, in cares, in jealousies!
Oh! that's a fruit that ripens hastily,
After 'tis knit to marriage: it begins,
As soon as the sun shines upon the bride
A little to show colour. Blessed powers!
Whence comes this alteration? the distractions,
The fears and doubts it brings are numberless,
And yet the cause I know not. What a peace
Has he that never marries! if he knew
The benefit he enjoy'd, or had the fortune
To come and speak with me, he should know then
The infinite wealth he had, and discern rightly
The greatness of his treasure by my loss:
Nay, what a quietness has he 'bove mine,
That wears his youth out in a strumpet's arms,
And never spends more care upon a woman,

* A *sucket* was a sort of dried sweetmeat: for *marchpane*, see note, vol. ii. p. 245.

Than at the time of lust; but walks away,
And if he find her dead at his return,
His pity is soon done, he breaks a sigh
In many parts, and gives her but a piece on't!
But all the fears, shames, jealousies, costs and troubles,
And still renew'd cares of a marriage bed,
Live in the issue, when the wife is dead.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. A good perfection to your thoughts.
Lean. The news, sir?
Mess. Though you were pleas'd of late to pin an error on me,
You must not shift another in your stead too:
The Duke has sent me for you.
Lean. How! for me, sir?
(Aside.) I see then 'tis my theft; we're both betray'd.
Well, I'm not the first 'has stol'n away a maid,
My countrymen have us'd it. I'll along with you, sir. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LIVIA's *House. A Banquet prepared. Enter* GUARDIANO *and* WARD.

Guard. Take you especial note of such a gentlewoman,
She's here on purpose; I have invited her,
Her father, and her uncle to this banquet;
Mark her behaviour well, it does concern you;
And what her good parts are, as far as time

And place can modestly require a knowledge of,
Shall be laid open to your understanding.
You know I'm both your guardian and your uncle;
My care of you is double, ward and nephew,
And I'll express it here.

Ward. Faith, I should know her
Now by her mark among a thousand women:
A little pretty deft and tidy thing you say?

Guard. Right.

Ward. With a lusty sprouting sprig in her hair?

Guard. Thou goest the right way still; take one mark more;
Thou shalt ne'er find her hand out of her uncle's,
Or else his out of hers, if she be near him;
The love of kind'red never yet stuck closer
Than their's to one another; he that weds her,
Marries her uncle's heart too. [*Cornets.*

Ward. Say you so, sir?
Then I'll be ask'd i' th' church to both of them.

Guard. Fall back; here comes the Duke.

Ward. He brings a gentlewoman,
I should fall forward rather.

Enter DUKE, *leading in* BRANCHA, *and followed by* FABRITIO, HIPPOLITO, LIVIA, MOTHER, ISABELLA, *and Attendants.*

Duke. Come, Brancha,
Of purpose sent into the world to show
Perfection once in woman; I'll believe
Hence forward they have ev'ry one a soul too
'Gainst all the uncourteous opinions
That man's uncivil rudeness ever held of 'em.
Glory of Florence, 'light into mine arms!

Enter LEANTIO.

Bran. Yon comes a grudging man will chide you, sir:
The storm is now in's heart, and would get nearer,
And fall here if it durst; it pours down yonder.
Duke. If that be he, the weather shall soon clear.
List, and I'll tell thee how. [*Whispers.*
Lean. (Aside.) A kissing too!
I see 'tis plain lust now; adultery bolden'd;
What will it prove anon, when 'tis stuff'd full
Of wine and sweetmeats, being so impudent fasting?
Duke. (To Lean.) We have heard of your good parts, sir, which we honour
With our embrace and love. *(To Gentlem.)* Is not the captainship
Of Rouan's citadel, since the late deceas'd,
Supplied by any yet?
Gentlem. By none, my lord.
Duke. (To Lean.) Take it, the place is yours then, and as faithfulness
And desert grows, our favour shall grow with't.
Rise now the captain of our fort at Rouans.
Lean. The service of whole life give your grace thanks.
Duke. Come sit, Brancha.
[*All sit down to the banquet.*
Lean. (Aside.) This is some good yet,
And more than e'er I look'd for; a fine bit
To stay a cuckold's stomach: all preferment
That springs from sin and lust, it shoots up quickly,
As gardeners' crops do in the rotten'st grounds;

So is all means rais'd from base prostitution,
E'en like a salad growing upon a dunghill.
I'm like a thing that never was yet heard of,
Half merry, and half mad; much like a fellow
That eats his meat with a good appetite,
And wears a plague-sore that would fright a country;
Or rather like the barren harden'd ass,
That feeds on thistles till he bleeds again;
And such is the condition of my misery.

Liv. Is that your son, widow?

Moth. Yes; did your ladyship never know that till now?

Liv. No, trust me did I,
(Aside.) Nor ever truly felt the power of love,
And pity to a man, till now I know him.
I have enough to buy me my desires,
And yet to spare; that's one good comfort.
(To Lean.) Hark you,
Pray let me speak with you, sir, before you go.

Lean. With me, lady? you shall, I am at your service.

What will she say now trow? more goodness yet!

Ward. I see her now I'm sure; the ape's so little,
I shall scarce feel her; I have seen almost
As tall as she sold in the fair for tenpence.
See how she simpers it, as if marmalade
Would not melt in her mouth; she might have the kindness, i'faith,
To send me a guilded bull from her own trencher;
A ram, a goat, or somewhat to be nibbling.
These women, when they come to sweet things once,

They forget all their friends, they grow so greedy;
Nay, oftentimes their husbands.

Duke. Here's a health now, gallants,
To the best beauty at this day in Florence.

Bran. Whoe'er she be, she shall not go unpledg'd, sir.

Duke. Nay, you're excus'd for this.

Bran. Who? I, my lord?

Duke. Yes, by the law of Bacchus; plead your benefit,
You are not bound to pledge your own health, lady.

Bran. That's a good way, my lord, to keep me dry.

Duke. Nay, then I will not offend Venus so much;
Let Bacchus seek his 'mends in another court;
Here's to thyself, Brancha.

Bran. Nothing comes
More welcome to that name than your grace.

Lean. (Aside.) So, so;
Here stands the poor thief now that stole the treasure,
And he's not thought on. Ours is near kin now
To a twin misery born into the world:
First the hard conscienc'd worldling, he hoards wealth up;
Then comes the next, and he feasts all upon't;
One's damn'd for getting, th' other for spending on't.
Oh! equal justice, thou hast met my sin
With a full weight; I'm rightly now oppress'd;
All her friends' heavy hearts lie in my breast.

Duke. Methinks there is no spirit amongst us gallants,

But what divinely sparkles from the eyes
Of bright Brancha; we sat all in darkness,
But for that splendor. Who was't told us lately
Of a match making right, a marriage tender?

Guard. 'Twas I, my lord.

Duke. 'Twas you indeed. Where is she?

Guard. This is the gentlewoman.

Fab. My lord, my daughter.

Duke. Why, here's some stirring yet.

Fab. She's a dear child to me.

Duke. That must needs be; you say she is your daughter.

Fab. Nay, my good lord, dear to my purse I mean
Beside my person, I ne'er reckon'd that.
She has the full qualities of a gentlewoman;
I have brought her up to music, dancing, what not,
That may commend her sex, and stir her husband.

Duke. And which is he now?

Guard. This young heir, my lord.

Duke. What is he brought up to?

Hip. (Aside.) To cat and trap.

Guard. My lord, he's a great ward, wealthy, but simple;
His parts consist in acres.

Duke. Oh, wise-acres.

Guard. You've spoke him in a word, sir.

Bran. 'Las, poor gentlewoman,
She's ill-bestead, unless she's dealt the wiselier,
And laid in more provision for her youth:
Fools will not keep in summer.

Lean. (Aside.) No, nor such wives
From whores in winter.

Duke. Yea, the voice too, sir!

Fab. Ay, and a sweet breast too*, my lord, I hope,
Or I have cast away my money wisely:
She took her pricksong earlier, my lord,
Than any of her kind'red ever did:
A rare child, though I say't; but I'd not have
The baggage hear so much, 'twould make her swell straight;
And maids of all things must not be puff'd up.

Duke. Let's turn us to a better banquet, then;
For music bids the soul of a man to a feast,
And that's indeed a noble entertainment,
Worthy Brancha's self; you shall perceive, beauty,
Our Florentine damsels are not brought up idly.

Bran. They are wiser of themselves it seems, my lord,
And can take gifts when goodness offers 'em.

[*Music.*

Lean. (Aside.) True, and damnation has taught you that wisdom;
You can take gifts too. Oh, that music mocks me!

Liv. (Aside.) I am as dumb to any language now
But love's, as one that never learn'd to speak:
I am not yet so old, but he may think of me;
My own fault, I have been idle a long time;
But I'll begin the week, and paint to-morrow,
So follow my true labour day by day.
I never thriv'd so well as when I us'd it.

[*Isabella sings.*

* See note, vol. iv. p. 354. Stevens has very justly ridiculed its use as a cant term among musicians; but our poet had anticipated him in the observations made upon it by Brancha.

What harder chance can fall to woman,
Who was born to cleave to some man,
Than to bestow her time, youth beauty,
Life's observance, honour, duty,
On a thing for no use good,
But to make physic work, or blood
Force fresh in an old lady's cheek?
She that would be
Mother of fools, let her compound with me.

Ward. (Aside.) Here's a tune indeed; pish! I had rather hear one ballad sung i' th' nose now, of the lamentable drowning of fat sheep and oxen, than all these simpering tunes play'd upon cat's guts, and sung by little kitlings.

Fab. How like you her breast now, my lord?

Bran. (Aside.) Her breast*?
He talks as if his daughter had given suck
Before she were married, as her betters have;
The next he praises sure will be her nipples.

Duke. (Aside to Bran.) Methinks now such a voice to such a husband,
Is like a jewel of unvalued worth,
Hung at a fool's ear.

Fab. May it please your grace
To give her leave to show another quality?

Duke. Marry, as many good ones as you will, sir. The more the better welcome.

Lean. (Aside.) But the less
The better practis'd: that soul's black indeed
That cannot commend virtue: but who keeps it?

* I think there is every reason to believe Brancha's speech and the Duke's spoken, as I have marked them, the one *aside*, and the other to Brancha; they were certainly not intended to be generally heard.

The extortioner will say to a sick beggar,
Heaven comfort thee, though he give none himself:
This good is common.

Fab. Will it please you now, sir,
To entreat your Ward to take her by the hand,
And lead her in a dance before the Duke?

Guard. That will I, sir; 'tis needful: hark you, nephew. [*Whispers to him.*

Fab. Nay, you shall see, young heir, what you've for your money,
Without fraud or imposture.

Ward. Dance with her?
Not I, sweet guardianer; do not urge my heart to't,
'Tis clean against my blood: dance with a stranger?
Let who's will do't, I'll not begin first with her.

Hip. (Aside.) No, fear't not, fool, she's took a better order.

Guard. Why, who shall take her then?

Ward. Some other gentleman:
Look, there's her uncle, a fine timber'd reveller;
Perhaps he knows the manner of her dancing too,
I'll have him do't before me; I have sworn guardianer,
Then may I learn the better.

Guard. Thou'lt be an ass still.

Ward. Ay, all that, uncle, shall not fool me out.
Pish! I stick closer to myself than so.

Guard. I must entreat you, sir, to take your niece
And dance with her; my ward's a little wilful,
He would have you show him the way.

Hip. Me, sir?
He shall command it at all hours; pray tell him so,

Guard. I thank you for him, he has not wit himself, sir.

Hip. Come, my life's peace, *(Aside.)* I have a strange office on't here;
'Tis some man's luck to keep the joys he likes
Conceal'd for his own bosom; but my fortune
To set 'em out now for another's liking;
Like the mad misery of necessitous man,
That parts from his good horse with many praises,
And goes on foot himself; need must be obey'd
In ev'ry action, it mars man and maid. [*Music.*

[*Hippolito and Isabella dance, he bowing and she courtseying to the Duke, and afterwards to each other, both before and after the dance.*

Duke. Signior Fabritio, you're a happy father;
Your cares and pains are fortunate you see;
Your cost bears noble fruits. Hippolito, thanks.

Fab. Here's some amends for all my charges yet.
She wins both prick and praise*, where'er she comes.

Duke. How lik'st, Brancha?

Bran. All things well, my lord:
But this poor gentlewoman's fortune, that's the worst.

Duke. There is no doubt, Brancha, she'll find leisure
To make that good enough; he's rich and simple.

Bran. She has the better hope o' th' upper hand indeed,
Which women strive for most.

Guard. Do't when I bid you, sir.

* The metaphor is taken from archery.

Ward. I'll venture but a hornpipe with her, Guardianer,
Or some such married man's dance.
Guard. Well, venture something, sir.
Ward. I have rhyme for what I do.
Guard. But little reason, I think.
Ward. Plain men dance the measures, the sinquapace, the gay:
Cuckolds dance the hornpipe; and farmers dance the hay:
Your soldiers dance the round, and maidens that grow big:
Your drunkards, the canaries; your whore and bawd, the jig.
Here's your eight kind of dancers, he that finds the ninth let him pay the minstrels.
Duke. Oh, here he appears once in his own person;
I thought he would have married her by attorney,
And lain with her so too.
Bran. Nay, my kind lord,
There's very seldom any found so foolish
To give away his part there.
Lean. (Aside.) Bitter scoff!
Yet I must do't: with what a cruel pride
The glory of her sin strikes bye my afflictions!
[*Ward and Isabella dance, he ridiculously imitates Hippolito.*
Duke. This thing will make shift, sirs, to make a husband,
For ought I see in him: how think'st, Brancha?
Bran. 'Faith an ill-favour'd shift, my lord, methinks;
If he would take some voyage when he's married,

Dangerous, or long enough, and scarce be seen
Once in nine year together, a wife then
Might make indifferent shift to be content with him.

Duke. A kiss; *(kisses her)*, that wit deserves to be made much on:
Come, our caroch.

Guard. Stands ready for your grace.

Duke. My thanks to all your loves. Come, fair Brancha,
We have took special care of you, and provided
Your lodging near us now.

Bran. Your love is great, my lord.

Duke. Once more our thanks to all.

Omnes. All bless'd honours guard you.

[*Exeunt all but Leantio and Livia. Cornets flourish.*

Lean. (Without noticing Liv.) Hast thou left me then, Brancha, utterly?
Oh, Brancha! now I miss thee; oh! return
And save the faith of woman: I ne'er felt
The loss of thee till now; 'tis an affliction
Of greater weight than youth was made to bear;
As if a punishment of after-life
Were fall'n upon man here; so new it is
To flesh and blood; so strange, so insupportable;
A torment e'en mistook, as if a body
Whose death were drowning, must needs therefore suffer it
In scalding oil.

Liv. Sweet sir!

Lean. (Without noticing her.) As long as mine eye saw thee,
I half enjoy'd thee.

Liv. Sir!

Lean. (Without noticing her.) Canst thou forget
The dear pains my love took? how it has watch'd
Whole nights together, in all weathers for thee,
Yet stood in heart more merry than the tempest
That sung about mine ears, like dangerous flatterers
That can set all their mischief to sweet tunes;
And then receiv'd thee from thy father's window,
Into these arms at midnight; when we embrac'd
As if we had been statues only made for't,
To show art's life, so silent were our comforts,
And kiss'd as if our lips had grown together?

Liv. This makes me madder to enjoy him now.

Lean. (Without noticing her.) Canst thou forget all this, and better joys
That we met after this, which then new kisses
Took pride to praise?

Liv. I shall grow madder yet:—Sir!

Lean. (Without noticing her.) This cannot be but of some close bawd's working:—
Cry mercy, lady! What would you say to me?
My sorrow makes me so unmannerly,
So comfort bless me, I had quite forgot you.

Liv. Nothing, but e'en in pity to that passion
Would give your grief good counsel.

Lean. Marry, and welcome, lady,
It never could come better.

Liv. Then first, sir,
To make away all your good thoughts at once of her,
Know, most assuredly, she is a strumpet.

Lean. Ha! *most assuredly?* Speak not a thing
So vile so certainly, leave it more doubtful.
Liv. Then I must leave all truth, and spare my knowledge,
A sin which I too lately found and wept for.
Lean. Found you it?
Liv. Ay, with wet eyes.
Lean. Oh, perjurious friendship!
Liv. You miss'd your fortunes when you met with her, sir.
Young gentlemen, that only love for beauty,
They love not wisely; such a marriage rather
Proves the destruction of affection;
It brings on want, and want's the key of whoredom.
I think you'd small means with her?
Lean. Oh, not any, lady.
Liv. Alas, poor gentleman! what mean'st thou, sir,
Quite to undo thyself with thine own kind heart?
Thou art too good and pitiful to woman:
Marry, sir, thank thy stars for this bless'd fortune,
That rids the summer of thy youth so well
From many beggars, that had lain a sunning
In thy beams only else, till thou hadst wasted
The whole days of thy life in heat and labour.
What would you say now to a creature found
As pitiful to you, and as it were
E'en sent on purpose from the whole sex general,
To requite all that kindness you have shown to't?
Lean. What's that, madam?
Liv. Nay, a gentlewoman, and one able
To reward good things; ay, and bears a conscience to't:

Couldst thou love such a one, that (blow all fortunes)
Would never see thee want?
Nay more, maintain thee to thine enemy's envy,
And shalt not spend a care for't, stir a thought,
Nor break a sleep? unless love's music waked thee,
No storm of fortune should: look upon me,
And know that woman.

Lean. Oh, my life's wealth, Bráncha!

Liv. Still with her name? will nothing wear it out?
That deep sigh went but for a strumpet, sir.

Lean. It can go for no other that loves me.

Liv. (Aside.) He's vex'd in mind; I came too soon to him:
Where's my discretion now, my skill, my judgment?
I'm cunning in all arts but my own, love.
'Tis as unseasonable to tempt him now
So soon, as [for] a widow to be courted
Following her husband's corse; or to make bargain
By the grave side, and take a young man there:
Her strange departure stands like a hearse yet
Before his eyes; which time will take down shortly. [*Exit.*

Lean. Is she my wife till death, yet no more mine?
That's a hard measure: then what's marriage good for?
Methinks by right I should not now be living,
And then 'twere all well. What a happiness
Had I been made of had I never seen her;
For nothing makes man's loss grievous to him,

But knowledge of the worth of what he loses;
For what he never had, he never misses:
She's gone for ever, utterly; there is
As much redemption of a soul from hell,
As a fair woman's body from his palace.
Why should my love last longer than her truth?
What is there good in woman to be lov'd,
When only that which makes her so has left her?
I cannot love her now, but I must like
Her sin, and my own shame too, and be guilty
Of law's breach with her, and mine own abusing;
All which were monstrous! then my safest course
For health of mind and body, is to turn
My heart, and hate her, most extremely hate her;
I have no other way: those virtuous powers
Which were chaste witnesses of both our troths,
Can witness she breaks first! and I'm rewarded
With captainship o' th' fort; a place of credit
I must confess, but poor; my factorship
Shall not exchange means with't; he that died last in't,
He was no drunkard, yet he died a beggar
For all his thrift; besides the place not fits me;
It suits my resolution, not my breeding.

Re-enter LIVIA.

Liv. (Aside.) I have try'd all ways I can, and have not power
To keep from sight of him.—How are you now, sir?
Lean. I feel a better ease, madam.
Liv. Thanks to blessedness!
You will do well I warrant you; fear it not, sir;
Join but your own good will to't; he's not wise

That loves his pain or sickness, or grows fond
Of a disease, whose property is to vex him,
And spitefully drink his blood up. Out upon't, sir!
Youth knows no greater loss. I pray let's walk, sir;
You never saw the beauty of my house yet,
Nor how abundantly fortune has bless'd me
In world treasure: trust me I have enough, sir,
To make my friend a rich man in my life,
A great man at my death; yourself will say so.
If you want any thing, and spare to speak,
Troth, I'll condemn you for a wilful man, sir.

Lean. Why sure this can be but the flattery of some dream.

Liv. Now, by this kiss, my love, my soul and riches,
'Tis all true substance! [*Kisses him.*
Come, you shall see my wealth; take what you list;
The gallanter you go, the more you please me:
I will allow you too your page and footman,
Your race-horses, or any various pleasure
Exercis'd youth delights in; but to me
Only, sir, wear your heart of constant stuff:
Do but you love enough, I'll give enough.

Lean. Troth then, I'll love enough, and take enough.

Liv. Then we are both pleas'd enough.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III.

Enter Guardiano *and* Isabella *at one Door, and the* Ward *and* Sordido *at another.*

Guard. Now, nephew, here's the gentlewoman again.

Ward. Mass! here she's come again; mark her now, Sordido.

Guard. This is the maid my love and care has chose
Out for your wife, and so I tender her to you;
Yourself has been eye-witness of some qualities
That speak a courtly breeding, and are costly.
I bring you both to talk together now;
'Tis time you grew familiar in your tongues;
To-morrow you join hands, and one ring ties you,
And one bed holds you; if you like the choice,
Her father and her friends are i' th' next room,
And stay to see the contract ere they part;
Therefore dispatch, good Ward, be sweet and short;
Like her, or like her not, there's but two ways;
And one your body, th' other your purse pays.

Ward. I warrant you, guardianer, I'll not stand all day thruming,
But quickly shoot my bolt at your next coming.

Guard. Well said: good fortune to your birding then.

Ward. I never miss'd mark yet.

Sord. Troth, I think, master, if the truth were known,
You never shot at any but the kitchen-wench,
And that was a she woodcock, a mere innocent,
That was oft lost and cry'd at eight-and-twenty.

Ward. No more of that meat, Sordido, here's eggs o' th' spit now.
We must turn gingerly; draw out the catalogue
Of all the faults of women.

Sord. How, all the faults? have you so little reason to think so much paper will lie in my

breeches? Why ten carts will not carry it, if you set down but the bawds. All the faults? pray let's be content with a few of 'em; and if they were less, you would find 'em enough, I warrant you. Look you, sir.

Isab. (Aside.) But that I have th' advantage of the fool,
As much as a woman's heart can wish and joy at,
What an infernal torment 'twere to be
Thus bought and sold, and turn'd and pry'd into, when, alas,
The worst bit is too good for him! the comfort is
'Has but a cater's place on't, and provides
All for another's table; yet how curious
The ass is; like some nice professor on't,
That buys up all the daintiest food i' th' markets,
And seldom licks his lips after a taste on't.

Sord. Now to her, now you've scan'd all her parts over.

Ward. But at [which] end shall I begin now, Sordido?

Sord. Oh, ever at a woman's lip, while you live, sir: do you ask that question?

Ward. Methinks, Sordido, she's but a crabbed face to begin with.

Sord. A crabbed face? that will save money.

Ward. How! save money, Sordido?

Sord. Ay, sir; for having a crabbed face of her own, she'll eat the less verjuice with her mutton; 'twill save verjuice at year's end, sir.

Ward. Nay, an your jests begin to be saucy once,
I'll make you eat your meat without mustard.

Sord. And that in some kind is a punishment.

Ward. Gentlewoman, they say 'tis your pleasure to be my wife, and you shall know shortly whether it be mine or no to be your husband; and thereupon thus I first enter upon you. *(Kisses her.)* Oh, most delicious scent! methinks it tasted as if a man had stept into a comfit-makers shop to let a cart go by, all the while I kiss'd her. It is reported, gentlewoman, you'll run mad for me if you have me not.

Isab. I should be in great danger of my wits, sir, For being so forward; *(aside)* should this ass kick backward now.

Ward. Alas, poor soul! and is that hair your own?

Isab. Mine own? yes sure, sir, I owe nothing for't.

Ward. 'Tis a good hearing, I shall have the less to pay when I have married you. *(To Sord.)* Look, do her eyes stand well.

Sord. They cannot stand better than in her head, I think: where would you have them? and for her nose, 'tis of a very good last.

Ward. I have known as good as that has not lasted a year though.

Sord. That's in the using of a thing; will not any strong bridge fall down in time, if we do nothing but beat at the bottom: a nose of buff would not last always, sir, especially if it came into th' camp once.

Ward. But, Sordido, how shall we do to make her laugh, that I may see what teeth she has; for I'll not bate her a tooth, nor take a black one into th' bargain.

Sord. Why, do but you fall in talk with her,

you cannot choose but one time or other, make her laugh, sir.

Ward. It shall go hard, but I will: *(To Isab.)* pray what qualities have you besides singing and dancing? can you play at shittlecock, forsooth?

Isab. Ay, and at stool-ball too, sir; I have great luck at it.

Ward. Why, can you catch a ball well?

Isab. I have catch'd two in my lap at one game.

Ward. What! have you, woman? I must have you learn
To play at trap too, then you're full and whole.

Isab. Any thing that you please to bring me up to,
I shall take pains to practise.

Ward. 'Twill not do, Sordido; we shall never get her mouth open wide enough.

Sord. No, sir? that's strange! then here's a trick for your learning.

[*Sordido gapes, Isabella gapes also, but covers her mouth with a handkerchief.*

Look now! look now! quick, quick there!

Ward. Pox of that scurvy mannerly trick with handkerchief,
It hinder'd me a little, but I am satisfied.
When a fair woman gapes, and stops her mouth so,
It shows like a cloth stopple in a cream-pot:
I have fair hope of her teeth now, Sordido.

Sord. Why then you've all well, sir, for ought I see;
She's right and straight enough, now as she stands;
They'll commonly lie crooked, that's no matter; wise gamesters
Never find fault with that, let 'em lie still so.

Ward. I'd fain mark how she goes, and then I have all: for of all creatures I cannot abide a splay-footed woman; she's an unlucky thing to meet in a morning; her heels keep together so, as if she were beginning an Irish dance still; and the wriggling of her bum playing the tune to't: but I have bethought a cleanly shift to find it; dab down as you see me, and peep of one side, when her back's toward you; I'll show you the way.

Sord. And you shall find me apt enough to peeping;

I have been of them has seen mad sights
Under your scaffolds.

Ward. Will it please you walk, forsooth,
A turn or two by yourself? you are so pleasing to me,
I take delight to view you on both sides.

Isab. I shall be glad to fetch a walk to your love, sir;
'Twill get affection a good-stomach, sir,
(Aside.) Which I had need have to fall to such coarse victuals.

[*She walks to the end of the stage, and they stoop down to look at her.*

Ward. Now go thy ways for a clean treading wench,
As ever man in modesty peep'd under.

Sord. I see the sweetest sight to please my master.
Never went Frenchman righter upon ropes,
Than she on Florentine rushes.

Ward. 'Tis enough, forsooth.

Isab. And how do you like me now, sir?

Ward. Faith so well,
I never mean to part with thee, sweetheart,
Under some sixteen children, and all boys.
Isab. You'll be at simple pains, if you prove kind,
And breed 'em all in your teeth *.
Ward. Nay, by my faith, what serves your belly for? 'twould make my cheeks look like blown bagpipes.

Enter GUARDIANO.

Guard. How now, ward and nephew,
Gentlewoman and niece! Speak, is it so or not?
Ward. 'Tis so; we are both agreed, sir.
Guard. In to your kind'red then;
There's friends, and wine, and music waits to welcome you.
Ward. Then I'll be drunk for joy.
Sord. And I for company,
I cannot break my nose in a better action.
[*Exeunt.*

* In allusion to a superstitious idea, that an affectionate husband had the tooth-ache while his wife was breeding.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Scene—BRANCHA'S *Lodgings at Court. Enter* BRANCHA, *attended by two* LADIES.

Bran. How go your watches, ladies? what's o'clock now?

1 *Lady.* By mine full nine.

2 *Lady.* By mine a quarter past.

1 *Lady.* I set mine by St. Mark's.

2 *Lady.* St. Anthony's they say goes truer.

1 *Lady.* That's but your opinion, madam,
Because you love a gentleman o' th' name.

2 *Lady.* He's a true gentleman then.

1 *Lady.* So may he be
That comes to me to-night, for ought you know.

Bran. I'll end this strife straight: I set mine by the sun;
I love to set by th' best, one shall not then
Be troubled to set often.

2 *Lady.* You do wisely in't.

Bran. If I should set my watch as some girls do
By ev'ry clock i' th' town, 'twould ne'er go true;
And too much turning of the dial's point,
Or tamp'ring with the spring, might in small time
Spoil the whole work too; here it wants of nine now.

1 *Lady.* It does indeed, forsooth; mine's nearest truth yet.

2 *Lady.* Yet I have found her
Lying with an advocate, which shew'd
Like two false clocks together in one parish.
Bran. So now I thank you, ladies; I desire
Awhile to be alone.
1 *Lady.* And I am nobody,
Methinks, unless I have one or other with me.
(Aside.) Faith my desire and hers will ne'er be sisters. [*Exit Ladies.*
Bran. How strangely woman's fortune comes about!
This was the farthest way to come to me,
All would have judg'd, that knew me born in Venice,
And there with many jealous eyes brought up,
That never thought they had me sure enough
But when they were upon me; yet my hap's
To meet it here, so far off from my birth-place,
My friends, or kind'red: 'tis not good in sadness,
To keep a maid so strict in her young days;
Restraint breeds wand'ring thoughts, as many fasting days
A great desire to see flesh stirring again:
I'll ne'er use any girl of mine so strictly:
Howe'er they're kept, their fortunes find 'em out;
I see't in me: if they be got in court,
I'll never forbid 'em the country; nor the court,
Though they be born i' th' country; they will come to't,
And fetch their falls a thousand mile about,
Where one would little think on't.

Enter LEANTIO.

Lean. I long to see how my despiser looks,
Now she's come here to court: these are her lodgings;
She's simply now advanc'd: I took her out
Of no such window, I remember first;
That was a great deal lower, and less carv'd.
Bran. How now! what silkworm's this? i' th' name of pride!
What, is it he?
Lean. A bow i' th' ham * to your greatness;
You must have now three legs †, I take it, must you not?
Bran. Then I must take another, I shall want else
The service I should have; you have but two there.
Lean. You're richly plac'd.
Bran. Methinks you're wond'rous brave, sir.
Lean. A sumptuous lodging.
Bran. You've an excellent suit there.
Lean. A chair of velvet.
Bran. Is your cloak lin'd through, sir?
Lean. You're very stately here.
Bran. Faith, something proud, sir.
Lean. Stay, stay, let's see your cloth of silver slippers.

* From this passage, as well as one in "Twelfth Night," where Malvolio imagines Sir Toby courtseying to him, it might be inferred that the custom of both sexes on these occasions were very similar. Mr. Reed, however, is of opinion that the word *court'sey* was employed to express acts of civility and respect by either men or women indiscriminately.

† "Three *legs*"—three bows. See note, vol. ii. p. 203.

Bran. Who's your shoemaker? he's made you a neat boot.

Lean. Will you have a pair?
The Duke will lend you spurs.

Bran. Yes, when I ride.

Lean. 'Tis a brave life you lead.

Bran. I could ne'er see you
In such good clothes in my time.

Lean. In your time?

Bran. Sure I think, sir,
We both thrive best asunder.

Lean. You're a whore.

Bran. Fear nothing, sir.

Lean. An impudent, spiteful, strumpet.

Bran. Oh, sir, you give me thanks for your captainship;
I thought you had forgot all your good manners.

Lean. And, to spite thee as much, look there; there read, [*Gives her a paper.*
Vex, gnaw; thou shalt find there I am not love-starv'd.
The world was never yet so cold, or pityless,
But there was ever still more charity found out,
Than at one proud fool's door; and 'twere hard, i'faith,
If I could not pass that. Read to thy shame there;
A cheerful, and a beauteous, benefactor too,
As e'er erected the good works of love.

Bran. (Aside.) Lady Livia!
Is't possible? Her worship was my pandress;
She dote, and send, and give, and all to him!
Why, here's a bawd plagu'd home:—You're simply happy, sir,
Yet I'll not envy you.

Lean. No, court saint, not thou;
You keep some friend of a new fashion;
There's no harm in your devil, he's a suckling;
But he will breed teeth shortly, will he not?

Bran. Take heed you play not then too long with him.

Lean. Yes, and the great one too: I shall find time
To play a hot religious bout with some of you,
And perhaps drive you and your course of sins
To their eternal kennels: I speak softly now,
'Tis manners in a noble woman's lodgings,
And I well know all my degrees of duty;
But come I to your everlasting parting once,
Thunder shall seem soft music to that tempest.

Bran. 'Twas said last week there would be change of weather,
When the moon hung so, and belike you heard it.

Lean. Why here's sin made, and ne'er a conscience put to't;
A monster with all forehead, and no eyes!
Why do I talk to thee of sense or virtue,
That art as dark as death? and as much madness
To set light before thee, as to lead blind folks
To see the monuments, which they may smell as soon
As they behold; marry, ofttimes their heads,
For want of light, may feel the hardness of 'em;
So shall thy blind pride my revenge and anger:
That canst not see it now; and it may fall
At such an hour, when thou least seest of all:
So to an ignorance darker than thy womb,
I leave thy perjur'd soul: a plague will come!

[*Exit.*

Bran. Get you gone first, and then I fear no greater;
Nor thee will I fear long: I'll have this sauciness
Soon banish'd from these lodgings, and the rooms
Perfum'd well after the corrupt air it leaves:
His breath has made me almost sick, in troth;
A poor base start-up! Life! because 'has got
Fair clothes by foul means, comes to rail, and show 'em.

Enter the DUKE.

Duke. Who's that?
Bran. Cry you mercy, sir!
Duke. Prithee who's that?
Bran. The former thing, my lord, to whom you gave
The captainship; he eats his meat with grudging still.
Duke. Still!
Bran. He comes vaunting here of his new love,
And the new clothes she gave him; Lady Livia:
Who but she now his mistress?
Duke. Lady Livia?
Be sure of what you say.
Bran. He show'd me her name, sir,
In perfum'd paper, her vows, her letter,
With an intent to spite me; so his heart said,
And his threats made it good; they were as spiteful
As ever malice utter'd, and as dangerous,
Should his hand follow the copy.
Duke. But that must not:
Do not you vex your mind; prithee to bed; go,
All shall be well and quiet.

Bran. I love peace, sir. [*Exit.*

Duke. And so do all that love: take you no care for't,
It shall be still provided to your hand. Who's near us there?

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord.

Duke. Seek out Hippolito,
Brother to Lady Livia, with all speed.

Mess. He was the last man I saw, my lord. [*Exit.*

Duke. Make haste.
He is a blood soon stir'd; and as he's quick
To apprehend a wrong, he's bold, and sudden
In bringing forth a ruin: I know likewise
The reputation of his sister's honour's,
As dear to him as life-blood to his heart;
Beside, I'll flatter him with a goodness to her,
Which I now thought on, but ne'er meant to practice,
Because I know her base; and that wind drives him.
The ulcerous reputation feels the poise
Of lightest wrongs, as sores are vex'd with flies:
He comes:—Hippolito, welcome.

Enter HIPPOLITO.

Hip. My lov'd lord.

Duke. How does that lusty widow, thy kind sister?
Is she not sped yet of a second husband?
A bed-fellow she has, I ask not that,
I know she's sped of him.

Hip. Of him, my lord?

Duke. Yes, of a bed-fellow: is the news so strange to you?

Hip. I hope 'tis so to all.

Duke. I wish it were, sir;
But 'tis confess'd too fast, her ignorant pleasures
Only by lust instructed, have receiv'd
Into their services an impudent boaster;
One that does raise his glory from her shame,
And tells the mid-day sun what's done in darkness;
Yet (blinded with her appetite) wastes her wealth,
Buys her disgraces at a dearer rate,
Than bounteous housekeepers purchase their honour.
Nothing sads me so much, as that in love
To thee, and to thy blood, I had pick'd out
A worthy match for her, the great Vincentio,
High in our favour, and in all mens' thoughts.

Hip. Oh, thou destruction of all happy fortunes,
Unsated blood! Know you the name, my lord,
Of her abuser?

Duke. One Leantio.

Hip. He's a factor.

Duke. He ne'er made so brave a voyage by his own talk.

Hip. The poor old widow's son!
I humbly take my leave.

Duke. *(Aside.)* I see 'tis done.
Give her good counsel, make her see her error,
I know she'll hearken to you.

Hip. Yes, my lord,
I make no doubt, as I shall take the course,
Which she shall never know till it be acted;

And when she wakes to honour, then she'll thank
me for't.
I'll imitate the pities of old surgeons
To this lost limb; who, ere they show their art,
Cast one asleep, then cut the diseas'd part:
So out of love to her I pity most,
She shall not feel him going till he's lost;
Then she'll commend the cure. [*Exit.*

Duke. The great cure's past;
I count this done already; his wrath's sure,
And speaks an injury deep: farewell, Leantio,
This place will never hear thee murmur more.
Our noble brother welcome!

Enter LORD CARDINAL *attended.*

Card. Set those lights down:
Depart till you be called. [*Exit Attendants.*

Duke. *(Aside.)* There's serious business
Fixed in his look; nay, it inclines a little
To the dark colour of a discontentment.
Brother, what is't commands your eye so powerfully?
Speak, you seem lost.

Card. The thing I look on seems so;
To my eyes lost for ever.

Duke. You look on me.

Card. What a grief 'tis to a religious feeling,
To think a man should have a friend so goodly,
So wise, so noble, nay, a duke, a brother,
And all this certainly damn'd!

Duke. How!

Card. 'Tis no wonder,
If your great sin can do't: dare you look up
For thinking of a vengeance? dare you sleep

For fear of never waking, but to death?
And dedicate unto a strumpet's love
The strength of your affections, zeal and health?
Here you stand now; can you assure your pleasures,
You shall once more enjoy her? but once more?
Alas! you cannot: what a misery 'tis then
To be more certain of eternal death,
Than of a next embrace! nay, shall I show you
How more unfortunate you stand in sin,
Than the low private man*: all his offences,
Like enclos'd grounds, keep but about himself,
And seldom stretch beyond his own soul's bounds;
And when a man grows miserable, 'tis some comfort
When he's no further charg'd, than with himself:
'Tis a sweet ease to wretchedness: but, great man,
Ev'ry sin thou commit'st shows like a flame
Upon a mountain; 'tis seen far about;
And with a big wind made of popular breath,
The sparkles fly through cities: here one takes,
Another catches there, and in short time
Waste all to cinders: but remember still
What burnt the vallies first, came from the hill;
Ev'ry offence draws his particular pain,
But 'tis example proves the great man's bane.
The sins of mean men lie like scatter'd parcels
Of an unperfect bill; but when such fall,
Then comes example, and that sums up all:
And this your reason grants; if men of good lives,
Who by their virtuous actions stir up others
To noble and religious imitation,

* The original reads, "*love* private man."

Receive the greater glory after death,
(As sin must needs confess) what may they feel
In height of torments, and in weight of veng'ance,
(Not only they themselves, not doing well)
But set * a light up to show men to hell?

Duke. If you have done, I have; no more, sweet brother.

Card. I know time spent in goodness, is too tedious:
This had not been a moment's space in lust now;
How dare you venture on eternal pain,
That cannot bear a minute's reprehension?
Methinks you should endure to hear that talk'd of
Which you so strive to suffer. Oh, my brother,
What were you, if you were taken now!
My heart weeps blood to think on't; 'tis a work
Of infinite mercy, (you can never merit)
That yet you are not death-struck; no, not yet:
I dare not stay you long, for fear you should not
Have time enough allow'd you to repent in.
There's but this wall *(pointing to his body)* betwixt you and destruction,
When you're at strongest; and but poor thin clay.
Think upon't, brother; can you come so near it,
For a fair strumpet's love? and fall into
A torment, that knows neither end nor bottom,
For beauty, but the deepness of a skin,
And that not of their own either? Is she a thing
Whom sickness dare not visit, or age look on,
Or death resist? does the worm shun her grave?
If not (as your soul knows it) why should lust
Bring man to lasting pain for rotten dust?

* The original reads, "*But sets* a light up."

Duke. Brother of spotless honour, let me weep
The first of my repentance in thy bosom,
And show the bless'd fruits of a thankful spirit;
And if I e'er keep woman more, unlawfully,
May I want penitence at my greatest need;
And wise men know there is no barren place
Threatens more famine, than a dearth in grace.

Card. Why here's a conversion, is at this time, brother,
Sung for a hymn in heaven *, and at this instant.
The powers of darkness groan, makes all hell sorry.
First, I praise heaven, then in my work I glory.
Who's there attends without?

Enter SERVANTS.

Ser. My lord.

Card. Take up those lights: there was a thicker darkness,
When they came first. The peace of a fair soul
Keep with my noble brother. [*Exit Card. &c.*

Duke. Joys be with you, sir!
She lies alone to-night for't, and must still,
Though it be hard to conquer; but I have vow'd
Never to know her as a strumpet more,
And I must save my oath: if fury fail not,
Her husband dies to-night, or at the most,
Lives not to see the morning spent to-morrow;
Then will I make her lawfully mine own,
Without this sin and horror. Now I'm chidden,
For what I shall enjoy then unforbidden;

* It is needless to say that our poet here alludes to a passage in the 15th Chapter of St. Luke. The foregoing scene, however, does him the highest honour, and is worthy of the most serious consideration of every reader.

And I'll not freeze in stoves. 'Tis but a while:
Live like a hopeful bridegroom, chaste from flesh,
And pleasure then will seem new, fair, and fresh.
[*Exit.*

Scene II.

Enter Hippolito.

Hip. The morning so far wasted, yet his baseness
So impudent! See if the very sun
Do not blush at him!
Dare he do thus much, and know me alive!
Put case one must be vicious, as I know myself
Monstrously guilty, there's a blind time made for't;
He might use only that, 'twere conscionable;
Art, silence, closeness, subtlety, and darkness,
Are fit for such a business; but there's no pity
To be bestow'd on an apparent sinner,
An impudent day-light lecher. The great zeal
I bear to her advancement in this match
With Lord Vincentio, as the Duke has wrought it,
To the perpetual honour of our house,
Puts fire into my blood, to purge the air
Of this corruption, fear it spread too far,
And poison the whole hopes of this fair fortune.
I love her good so dearly, that no brother
Shall venture farther for a sister's glory,
Than I for her preferment.

Enter Leantio *and a* Page.

Lean. Once again
I'll see that glist'ring whore, shines like a serpent
Now the court sun's upon her. Page!

Page. Anon, sir!

Lean. I'll go in state too; see the coach be ready.
I'll hurry away presently.

Hip. Yes, you shall hurry,
And the devil after you: take that at setting forth.
[*Strikes him.*
Now, an you'll draw, we are on equal terms, sir.
Thou took'st advantage of my name in honour,
Upon my sister; I ne'er saw the stroke
Come, till I found my reputation bleeding;
And therefore count it I no sin to valour
To serve thy lust so: now we are of even hand,
Take your best course against me. You must die.

Lean. How close sticks envy to man's happiness!
When I was poor, and little car'd for life,
I had no such means offer'd me to die,
No man's wrath minded me. Slave, I turn this to thee,
[*Draws.*
To call thee to account, for a wound lately
Of a base stamp upon me.

Hip. 'Twas most fit
For a base mettle. Come and fetch one now
More noble then; for I will use thee fairer
Than thou hast done thy soul, or our honour;
[*They fight.*
And there I think 'tis for thee.

Within. Help! help! Oh, part 'em!

Lean. (*Falls.*) False wife! I feel now thou'st pray'd heartily for me:
Rise, strumpet, by my fall; thy lust may reign now;
My heart-string, and the marriage knot that ty'd thee,
Break both together. [*Dies.*

Hip. There I heard the sound on't;
And never lik'd string better.

Enter GUARDIANO, LIVIA, ISABELLA, WARD, *and* SORDIDO.

Liv. 'Tis my brother!
Are you hurt, sir?
Hip. Not any thing.
Liv. Blessed fortune!
Shift for thyself: what is he thou hast kill'd?
Hip. Our honour's enemy.
Guard. Know you this man, lady?
Liv. Leantio? My love's joy? *(To Hip.)*
Wounds stick upon thee
As deadly as thy sins! art thou not hurt,
(The devil take that fortune), and he dead?
Drop plagues into thy bowels without voice,
Secret, and fearful! Run for officers;
Let him be apprehended with all speed,
For fear he 'scape away; lay hands on him.
We cannot be too sure, 'tis wilful murder:
(They seize Hip.) You do heaven's veng'ance,
and the law just service.
You know him not as I do; he's a villain,
As monstrous as a prodigy, and as dreadful.
Hip. Will you but entertain a noble patience,
Till you but hear the reason, worthy sister?
Liv. The reason! that's a jest hell falls a laughing at:
Is there a reason found for the destruction
Of our more lawful loves; and was there none
To kill the black lust 'twixt thy niece and thee,
That has kept close so long?
Guard. How's that, good madam?

Liv. Too true, sir; there she stands, let her deny't:
The deed cries shortly in the midwife's arms,
Unless the parent's sins strike it still-born:
And if you be not deaf, and ignorant,
You'll hear strange notes ere long. Look on me, wench!
'Twas I betray'd thy honour subtilely to him
Under a false tale; it lights upon me now;
His arm has paid me home upon thy breast,
My sweet belov'd Leantio!

Guard. Was my judgment
And care in choice so dev'lishly abus'd,
So beyond shamefully—all the world will grin at me!

Ward. Oh, Sordido, Sordido, I'm damn'd, I'm damn'd!

Sord. Damn'd! why, sir?

Ward. One of the wicked; dost not see't? a cuckold, a plain reprobate cuckold.

Sord. Nay, an you be damn'd for that, be of good cheer, sir;
You've gallant company of all professions; I'll have a wife
Next Sunday too, because I'll along with you myself.

Ward. That will be some comfort yet.

Liv. You, sir, that bear your load of injuries,
As I of sorrows, lend me your griev'd strength
To this sad burthen; *(pointing to the body of Leantio.)* who in life wore actions,
Flames were not nimbler. We will talk of things
May have the luck to break our hearts together

Guard. I'll list to nothing but revenge and anger,
Whose counsels I will follow.

[*Exeunt Livia and Guardiano with the body of Leantio.*

Sord. A wife, quoth'a!
Here's a sweet plum-tree of your gardener's graffing!

Ward. Nay, there's a worse name belongs to this fruit yet, an you could hit on't; a more open one: for he that marries a whore, looks like a fellow bound all his lifetime to a medler-tree, and that's good stuff; 'tis no sooner ripe, but it looks rotten; and so do some queans at nineteen. A pox on't! I thought there was some knavery a-broach, for something stir'd in her belly the first night I lay with her.

Sord. What, what, sir!

Ward. This is she brought up so courtly, can sing, and dance, and tumble too methinks; I'll never marry wife again that has so many qualities.

Sord. Indeed they are seldom good, master; for likely when they are taught so many, they will have one trick more of their own finding out. Well, give me a wench but with one good quality, to lie with none but her husband, and that's bringing up enough for any woman breathing.

Ward. This was the fault when she was tender'd to me; you never look'd to this.

Sord. Alas! how would you have me see through a great farthingale, sir? I cannot peep through a mill-stone, or in the going to see what's done i' th' bottom.

Ward. Her father prais'd her breast; she'd the voice, forsooth!
I marvel'd she sung so small indeed, being no maid;
Now I perceive there's a young chorister in her belly:
This breeds a singing in my head, I'm sure.

Sord. 'Tis but the tune of your wife's sinquapace danc'd in a featherbed: faith, go lie down, master; but take heed your horns do not make holes in the pillowbers. *(Aside.)* I would not batter brows with him for a hogshead of angels: he would prick my skull as full of holes as a scrivener's sand-box. [*Exeunt Ward and Sord.*

Isab. (Aside.) Was ever maid so cruelly beguil'd
To the confusion of life, soul, and honour,
All of one woman's murd'ring! I'd fain bring
Her name no nearer to my blood than woman,
And 'tis too much of that. Oh, shame and horror!
In that small distance from yon man to me,
Lies sin enough to make a whole world perish.
(To Hip.) 'Tis time we parted, sir, and left the sight
Of one another; nothing can be worse
To hurt repentance; for our very eyes
Are far more poisonous to religion,
Than basilisks to them: if any goodness
Rest in you, hope of comforts, fear of judgments!
My request is, I ne'er may see you more;
And so I turn me from you everlastingly,
So is my hope to miss you: but for her,
That durst so dally with a sin so dangerous,
And lay a snare so spitefully for my youth,

If the least means but favour my revenge,
That I may practise the like cruel cunning
Upon her life, as she has on mine honour,
I'll act it without pity.

Hip. Here's a care
Of reputation, and a sister's fortune
Sweetly rewarded by her: would a silence,
As great as that which keeps among the graves,
Had everlastingly chain'd up her tongue;
My love to her has made mine miserable.

Enter GUARDIANO *and* LIVIA.

Guard. (Aside to Liv.) If you can but dissemble your heart's griefs now;
Be but a woman so far.

Liv. (Aside to Guard.) Peace! I'll strive, sir.

Guard. (Aside to Liv.) As I can wear my injuries in a smile.
Here's an occasion offer'd, that gives anger
Both liberty and safety to perform
Things worth the fire it holds, without the fear
Of danger, or of law; for mischiefs acted
Under the privilege of a marriage triumph
At the Duke's hasty nuptials, will be thought
Things merely accidental, all by chance,
Not got of their own natures.

Liv. (Aside to Guard.) I conceive you, sir,
Even to a longing for performance on't;
And here behold some fruits—*(Kneels to Hip. and Isab.)* Forgive me both,
What I am now, return'd to sense and judgment:
'Tis not the same rage and distraction
Presented lately to you; that rude form

Is gone for ever; I am now myself,
That speaks all peace, and friendship; and these tears
Are the true springs of hearty penitent sorrow
For those foul wrongs, which my forgetful fury
Slander'd your virtues with: this gentleman
Is well resolv'd now.

Guard. I was never otherwise;
I knew, alas! 'twas but your anger spake it,
And I ne'er thought on't more.

Hip. Pray rise, good sister.

Isab. (Aside.) Here's e'en as sweet amends made for a wrong now,
As one that gives a wound, and pays the surgeon;
All the smart's nothing, the great loss of blood,
Or time of hind'rance: well, I had a mother,
I can dissemble too.—What wrongs have slip'd
Through anger's ignorance, aunt, my heart forgives.

Guard. Why that's tuneful now!

Hip. And what I did, sister,
Was all for honour's cause, which time to come
Will approve to you.

Liv. Being awak'd to goodness,
I understand so much, sir, and praise now
The fortune of your arm, and of your safety;
For by his death you've rid me of a sin
As costly as e'er woman doted on;
'T has pleas'd the Duke so well too, that (behold, sir)
'Has sent you here your pardon, which I kiss'd
With most affectionate comfort; when 'twas brought,

Then was my fit just pass'd; it came so well, methought,
To glad my heart.
Hip. I see his grace thinks on me.
Liv. There's no talk now but of the preparation
For the great marriage.
Hip. Does he marry her, then?
Liv. With all speed, suddenly, as fast as cost
Can be laid on with many thousand hands.
This gentleman and I had once a purpose
To have honoured the first marriage of the Duke
With an invention of his own; 'twas ready
The pains well past, most of the charge bestow'd on't;
Then came the death of your good mother, niece,
And turn'd the glory of it all to black:
'Tis a device would fit these time so well too;
Art's treasury not better; if you'll join
It shall be done; the cost shall all be mine.
Hip. You've my voice first, 'twill well approve my thankfulness
For the Duke's love and favour.
Liv. What say you, niece?
Isab. I am content to make one.
Guard. The plot's full then;
Your pages, madam, will make shift for cupids.
Liv. That will they, sir.
Guard. You'll play your old part still.
Liv. What is't? Good troth, I have e'en forgot it.
Guard. Why, Juno Pronuba, the marriage goddess.
Liv. 'Tis right indeed.
Guard. And you shall play the nymph,
That offers sacrifice to appease her wrath.

Isab. Sacrifice, good sir?

Liv. Must I be appeas'd then?

Guard. That's as you list yourself, as you see cause.

Liv. Methinks 'twould show the more state in her deity,
To be incens'd.

Isab. 'Twould! but my sacrifice
Shall take a course to appease you, *(aside)* or I'll fail in't,
And teach a sinful bawd to play a goddess.

[*Exit.*

Guard. For our parts, we'll not be ambitious, sir:
Please you walk in, and see the project drawn,
Then take your choice.

Hip. I weigh not, so I have one.

[*Exeunt Guard. and Hip.*

Liv. How much ado have I to restrain fury
From breaking into curses! Oh, how painful 'tis
To keep great sorrow smother'd! sure, I think,
'Tis harder to dissemble grief than love.
Leantio, here the weight of thy loss lies,
Which nothing but destruction can suffice.

[*Exit.*

Hautboys. The DUKE *and* BRANCHA *enter in great State, very richly attired, attended by Lords, Cardinals, Ladies, and others: as they are passing solemnly over the Stage, the* LORD CARDINAL *enters in a rage, and interrupts the Ceremony.*

Card. Cease, cease! Religious honours done to sin,
Disparage virtue's reverence, and will pull

Heaven's thunder upon Florence: holy ceremonies
Were made for sacred uses, not for sinful.
Are these the fruits of your repentance, brother?
Better it had been you had never sorrow'd,
Than to abuse the benefit, and return
To worse than where sin left you.
Vow'd you then never to keep strumpet more,
And are you now so swift in your desires,
To knit your honour and your life fast to her?
Is not sin sure enough to wretched man,
But he must bind himself in chains to't? Worse!
Must marriage, that immaculate robe of honour,
That renders virtue glorious, fair, and fruitful
To her great master, be now made the garment
Of leprosy and foulness? Is this penitence
To sanctify hot lust? What is it otherwise
Than worship done to devils? Is this the best
Amends that sin can make after her riots?
As if a drunkard, to appease heaven's wrath,
Should offer up his surfeit for a sacrifice:
If that be comely, then lust's offerings are
On wedlock's sacred altar.

Duke. Here you're bitter
Without cause, brother: what I vow'd I keep,
As safe as you your conscience: and this needs not;
I taste more wrath in't than I do religion,
And envy more than goodness: the path now
I tread is honest, leads to lawful love,
Which virtue in her strictness would not check.
I vow'd no more to keep a sensual woman;
'Tis done, I mean to make a lawful wife of her.

Card. He that taught you that craft,
Call him not master long, he will undo you:
Grow not too cunning for your soul, good brother:

Is it enough to use adulterous thefts,
And then take sanctuary in marriage?
I grant, so long as an offender keeps
Close in a privileged temple, his life's safe;
But if he ever venture to come out,
And so be taken, then he surely dies for't:
So now you're safe; but when you leave this body,
Man's only privileg'd temple upon earth,
In which the guilty soul takes sanctuary,
Then you'll perceive what wrongs chaste vows endure,
When lust usurps the bed that should be pure.

Bran. Sir, I have read you over all this while
In silence, and I find great knowledge in you,
And severe learning; yet 'mongst all your virtues
I see not charity written; which some call
The first-born of religion, and I wonder
I cannot see't in yours: believe it, sir,
There is no virtue can be sooner miss'd,
Or later welcom'd; it begins the rest,
And sets 'em all in order*; Heaven and angels
Take great delight in a converted sinner.
Why should you then, a servant and professor,
Differ so much from them? If ev'ry woman,
That commits evil, should be therefore kept
Back in desires of goodness, how should virtue
Be known and honour'd? From a man that's blind,
To take a burning taper, 'tis no wrong,
He never misses it: but to take light
From one that sees, that's injury and spite.

* Brancha here evidently alludes to the 13th chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians:—

"Mark you this, Bassanio;
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."

Pray whether is religion better serv'd,
When lives that are licentious are made honest,
Than when they still run through a sinful blood?
'Tis nothing virtue's temples to deface;
But build the ruins, there's a work of grace.

Duke. I kiss thee for that spirit; thou hast prais'd thy wit
A modest way. On, on there! [*Hautboys.*

Card. Lust is bold,
And will have veng'ance speak, ere 't be controul'd. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter GUARDIANO *and* WARD.

Guard. Speak, hast thou any sense of thy abuse?
Dost thou know what wrong's done thee?

Ward. I were an ass else.
I cannot wash my face, but I am feeling on't.

Guard. Here take this caltrop, then convey it secretly
Into the place I show'd you: look you, sir,
This is the trap-door to't.

Ward. I know't of old, uncle, since the last triumph; here rose up a devil with one eye, I remember, with a company of fireworks at's tail.

Guard. Prithee leave squibbing now. Mark me, and fail not; but when thou hear'st me give a stamp, down with't; the villain's caught then.

Ward. If I miss you, hang me: I love to catch a villain, and your stamp shall go current I warrant you. But how shall I rise up and let him down too all at one hole? that will be a horrible puzzle. You know I have a part in't, I play Slander.

Guard. True, but never make you ready for't.

Ward. No? my clothes are bought and all, and a foul fiend's head with a long contumelious tongue i' th' chaps on't, a very fit shape for Slander i' th' out-parishes.

Guard. It shall not come so far: thou understand'st it not.

Ward. Oh, oh!

Guard. He shall lie deep enough ere that time,
And stick first upon those.

Ward. Now I conceive you, guardiner.

Guard. Away, list to the privy stamp, that's all thy part.

Ward. Stamp my horns in a mortar if I miss you, and give the powder in white wine to sick cuckolds, a very present remedy for the head-ache. [*Exit.*

Guard. If this should any way miscarry now
(As if the fool be nimble enough, 'tis certain),
The pages that present the swift-wing'd Cupids,
Are taught to hit him with their shafts of love,
Fitting his part, which I have cunningly poison'd:
He cannot 'scape my fury; and those ills
Will be laid all on fortune, not our wills;
That's all the sport on't! for who will imagine,
That at the celebration of this night
Any mischance that hap's, can flow from spite?
[*Exit.*

Scene II.

Flourish. Enter above, Duke, Brancha, Lord Cardinal, Fabritio, *and other Cardinals, Lords and Ladies in State.*

Duke. Now, our fair dutchess, your delight shall witness
How you're belov'd and honour'd; all the glories
Bestow'd upon the gladness of this night,
Are done for your bright sake.

Bran. I am the more

In debt, my lord, to loves and courtesies,
That offer up themselves so bounteously
To do me honour'd grace, without my merit.

Duke. A goodness set in greatness! how it sparkles
Afar off like pure diamonds set in gold.
How perfect my desires were, might I witness
But a fair noble peace, 'twixt your two spirits!
The reconcilement would be more sweet to me,
Than longer life to him that fears to die.
(To the Card.) Good sir.

Card. I profess peace, and am content.

Duke. I'll see the seal upon't, and then 'tis firm.

Card. You shall have all you wish.

Duke. I have all indeed now.

Bran. (Aside.) But I have made surer work; this shall not blind me:
He that begins so early to reprove,
Quickly rid him, or look for little love.
Beware a brother's envy; he's next heir too.
Cardinal, you die this night; the plot's laid surely:
In time of sports death may steal in securely;
Then 'tis least thought on:
For he that's most religious, holy friend,
Does not at all hours think upon his end;
He has his times of frailty, and his thoughts,
Their transportations too, through flesh and blood,
For all his zeal, his learning, and his light,
As well as we, poor soul, that sin by night.

Duke. What's this, Fabritio?

[*Looking at a paper.*

Fab. Marry, my lord, the model
Of what's presented.

Duke. Oh, we thank their loves:
Sweet dutchess, take your seat; list to the argument. [*Reads.*

There is a nymph that haunts the woods and springs,
In love with two at once, and they with her;
Equal it runs; but to decide these things,
The cause to mighty Juno they refer,
She being the marriage-goddess: the two lovers
They offer sighs; the nymph a sacrifice;
All to please Juno, who by signs discovers
How the event shall be, so that strife dies:
Then springs a second; for the man refus'd
Grows discontent, and out of love abus'd,
He raises Slander up, like a black fiend,
To disgrace th' other, which pays him i' th' end.

Bran. In troth, my lord, a pretty pleasing argument,
And fits th' occasion well; Envy and Slander
Are things soon rais'd against two faithful lovers;
But comfort is, they're not long unrewarded.
[*Music.*

Duke. This music shows they're upon entrance now.

Bran. (Aside.) Then enter all my wishes.

Enter HYMEN *in a yellow Robe,* GANYMED *in a blue Robe powdered with Stars, and* HEBE *in a white Robe with golden Stars, with covered Cups in their Hands: they dance a short Dance, then bowing to the* DUKE *and the rest of the Company,* HYMEN *speaks, addressing himself to* BRANCHA.

Hym. To thee, fair bride, Hymen offers up
Of nuptial joys this the celestial cup:

Taste it, and thou shalt ever find
Love in thy bed, peace in thy mind.
Bran. We'll taste you sure, 'twere pity to disgrace
So pretty a beginning.
Duke. 'Twas spoke nobly.
Gan. Two cups of nectar have we begg'd from Jove;
Hebe, give that to innocence, I this to love.
Take heed of stumbling more, look to your way,
Remember still the Via Lactea.
Hebe. Well, Ganymed, you have more faults, though not so known;
I spill'd one cup, but you have filch'd many a one.
Hym. No more; forbear for Hymen's sake;
In love we met, and so let's part. [*Exeunt.*
Duke. But soft! here's no such persons in the argument
As these three, Hymen, Hebe, Ganymed.
The actors that this model here discovers
Are only four—Juno, a nymph, two lovers.
Bran. This is some anti-mask belike, my lord,
To entertain time: now my peace is perfect,
Let sports come on apace; now is their time, my lord. [*Music.*
Hark you! you hear from 'em.
Duke. The nymphs indeed!

Enter two dressed like Nymphs, bearing two Tapers lighted; then ISABELLA, *dressed with Flowers and Garlands, bearing a Censor with Fire in it; they set the Censor and Tapers on Juno's Altar with much Reverence; this Ditty being sung in Parts.*

[Ió], Juno, nuptial goddess,
Thou that rul'st o'er coupled bodies,
Ty'st man to woman, ne'er to forsake her,
Thou only powerful marriage-maker,
Pity this amaz'd affection;
I love both, and both love me;
Nor know I where to give rejection,
My heart likes so equally,
Till thou set'st right my peace of life,
And with thy power conclude this strife.

Isab. Now, with my thanks, depart you to the springs;
I to these wells of love: thou sacred goddess,
And queen of nuptials, daughter to great Saturn,
Sister and wife to Jove, imperial Juno,
Pity this passionate conflict in my breast,
This tedious war, 'twixt two affections;
Crown me with victory, and my heart's at peace.

Enter HIPPOLITO *and* GUARDIANO, *dressed like Shepherds.*

Hip. Make me that happy man, thou mighty goddess.
Guard. But I live most in hope, if truest love
Merit the greatest comfort.
Isab. I love both
With such an even and fair affection,

I know not which to speak for, which to wish for,
Till thou, great arbitress, 'twixt lovers' hearts,
By thy auspicious grace, design the man:
Which pity I implore.

Both. We all implore it.

Isab. And after sighs, contritions truest odours,
[*Livia descends attired like Juno.*
I offer to thy powerful deity
This precious incense; *(scatters incense on the fire)*, may it ascend peacefully:
(Aside.) And if it keep true touch, my good aunt Juno,
'Twill try your immortality ere 't be long:
I fear you'll never get so nigh heaven again,
When you're once down.

Liv. Though you and your affections
Seem all as dark to our illustrious brightness
As night's inheritance, hell, we pity you,
And your requests are granted: you ask signs;
They shall be given you; we'll be gracious to you.
He, of those twain, which we determine for you,
Love's arrows shall wound twice, the later wound
Betokens love in age; for so are all
Whose love continues firmly all their lifetime,
Twice wounded at their marriage; else affection
Dies when youth ends. (This savour overcomes me!)
Now for a sign of wealth and golden days,
Bright-ey'd prosperity, which all couples love,
Ay, and makes love take that*. Our brother Jove
Never denies us of his burning treasure,
T' express bounty. [*Isabella sinks down.*

* I confess I have no very clear understanding of this passage.

Duke. She falls down upon't.
What's the conceit of that?
Fab. As overjoy'd belike.
Too much prosperity overjoys us all,
And she has her lapful it seems, my lord.
Duke. This swerves a little from the argument though:
Look you, my lords.
Guard. (Aside.) All's fast: now comes my part to toll* him hither;
Then, with a stamp given, he's dispatch'd as cunningly. [*Guard. falls through a trap-door.*
Hip. Stark dead: Oh treachery! cruelly made away! how's that?
Fab. Look, there's one of the lovers dropp'd away too.
Duke. Why, sure this plot's drawn false; here's no such thing.
Liv. Oh, I am sick to the death! let me down quickly;
This fume is deadly: oh, 't has poison'd me!
My subtlety is sped, her art has quitted me;
My own ambition pulls me down to ruin.
[*Falls down and dies.*
Hip. Nay, then I kiss thy cold lips, and applaud
This thy revenge in death.
[*Kisses the body of Isabella.*
Fab. Look, Juno's down too:
[*Cupids shoot at Hip.*
What makes she there? her pride should keep aloft.

* To *entice*, or *allure him*: the word frequently occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher.

She was wont to scorn the earth in other shows:
Methinks her peacock's feathers are much pull'd.
Hip. Oh! death runs through my blood, in a wild flame too.
Plague of those Cupids! some lay hold on 'em;
Let 'em not 'scape, they have spoil'd me; the shaft's deadly.
Duke. I have lost myself in this quite.
Hip. My great lords, we are all confounded.
Duke. How?
Hip. Dead; and I worse.
Fab. Dead! my girl dead? I hope
My sister Juno has not serv'd me so.
Hip. Lust and forgetfulness has been amongst us,
And we are brought to nothing: some bless'd charity
Lend me the speeding pity of his sword
To quench this fire in blood. Leantio's death
Has brought all this upon us: now I taste it,
And made us lay plots to confound each other:
The event so proves it; and man's understanding
Is riper at his fall, than all his lifetime.
She in a madness for her lover's death,
Reveal'd a fearful lust in our near bloods,
For which I am punish'd dreadfully and unlook'd for;
Prov'd her own ruin too; veng'ance met vengeance,
Like a set match; as if the plagues of sin
Had been agreed to meet her altogether.
But how her fawning partner fell I reach not,
Unless caught by some spring of his own setting:
(For, on my pain, he never dream'd of dying;)
The plot was all his own, and he had cunning
Enough to save himself; but 'tis the property

Of guilty deeds to draw your wise men downward,
Therefore the wonder ceases.—Oh, this torment!

Duke. Our guard below there!

Enter a LORD *with a Guard.*

Lord. My lord.

Hip. Run and meet death then,
And cut off time and pain. [*Falls on his sword.*

Lord. Behold, my lord, he's run his breast upon a weapon's point.

Duke. Upon the first night of our nuptial honours,
Destruction play her triumph, and great mischiefs
Mask in expected pleasures: 'tis prodigious!
They're things most fearfully ominous: I like 'em not.
Remove these ruin'd bodies from our eyes.

Brun. (Aside.) Not yet no change? when falls he to the earth?

Lord. Please but your excellence to peruse that paper,
Which is a brief confession from the heart
Of him that fell first, ere his soul departed;
And there the darkness of these deeds speaks plainly:
'Tis the full scope, the manner, and intent.
His ward, that ignorantly let him down,
Fear put to present flight at the voice of him.

Brun. (Aside.) Nor yet?

Duke. Read, read! for I am lost in sight and strength. [*Falls.*

Card. My noble brother!

Brun. Oh, the curse of wretchedness!
My deadly hand is fall'n upon my lord:

Destruction take me to thee! give me way;
The pains and plagues of a lost soul upon him,
That hinders me a moment!

Duke. My heart swells bigger yet: help! here break't ope!
My breast flies open next. [*Dies.*

Bran. Oh! with the poison,
That was prepar'd for thee; thee, Cardinal;
'Twas meant for thee.

Card. Poor prince!

Bran. Accursed error!
Give me thy last breath, thou infected bosom,
And wrap two spirits in one poison'd vapour.
Thus, thus, reward thy murderer, and turn death
Into a parting kiss: my soul stands ready at my lips,
E'en vex'd to stay one minute after thee.
[*Kisses the dead body of the Duke.*

Card. The greatest sorrow and astonishment
That ever struck the general peace of Florence,
Dwells in this hour.

Bran. So my desires are satisfied,
I feel death's power within me.
Thou hast prevail'd in something (cursed poison!)
Though thy chief force was spent in my lord's bosom:
But my deformity in spirit's more foul;
A blemish'd face best fits a leprous soul.
What make I here? these are all strangers to me,
Not known but by their malice; now thou'rt gone;
Nor do I seek their pities. [*Stabs herself**.

* I have added this stage direction, without which I cannot otherwise understand the following speech of the Lord Cardinal's.

Card. Oh, restrain
Her ignorant, wilful hand!
Bran. Now do; 'tis done.
Leantio, now I feel the breach of marriage
At my heart-breaking. Oh, the deadly snares
That women set for women, without pity
Either to soul or honour! Learn by me
To know your foes: in this belief I die;
Like our own sex, we have no enemy: no enemy.
Lord. See, my lord,
What shift she's made to be her own destruction.
Bran. Pride, greatness, honours, beauty, youth, ambition,
You must all down together, there's no help for't:
Yet this my gladness is, that I remove,
Tasting the same death in a cup of love. [*Dies.*
Card. Sin, what thou art, these ruins show too piteously.
Two kings on one throne cannot sit together,
But one must needs down, for his title's wrong;
So where lust reigns, that prince cannot reign long*. [*Exeunt.*

* It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the incidents in this last act are by far too crowded, or that the means by which they are produced are not sufficiently explained. The editor has tried to supply this deficiency (in part) by additional marginal directions, the propriety of which he readily submits to the judgment of those acquainted with the original.

FINIS.

A

TRICK

TO

CATCH THE OLD ONE:

A

COMEDY.

BY

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Pecunius Lucre, uncle to Witgood, at variance with Hoard.
Walkadine Hoard, at variance with Lucre.
Theodorus Witgood, nephew to Lucre, in love with Hoard's niece.
Host, pretended servant to Courtezan.
Dampit, an usurer.
Moneylove.
Gulfe.
Onesiphorus Hoard.
Spichcock, Lamprey, Limber, Kicks, } friends of Hoard's.
Sir Launcelot, a friend of Dampit's.
Three Gentlemen, friends of Lucre's.
George, servant to Lucre.
George, servant to Hoard.
Sam Freedom, son to Lucre's wife.

Courtezan, mistress to Witgood, the pretended Widow Medlar.
Jenny, Lucre's wife.
Niece to Hoard, in love with Witgood.
Lady Foxtone.
Audrey, servant to Dampit.

Three Creditors of Witgood's, a Vintner, Waiter, Boy, Scrivener, Tailor, Barber, Perfumer, Falconer, Huntsman, Servants, and Gentlemen, &c.

A

TRICK TO CATCH THE OLD ONE.

ACT I. Scene I.

Enter Witgood, *solus.*

Wit. All's gone! still thou'rt a gentleman, that's all; but a poor one, that's nothing. What milk brings thy meadows forth now? where are thy goodly uplands, and thy down lands? all sunk into that little pit lechery? Why should a gallant pay but two shillings for his ordinary that nourishes him, and twenty times two for his brothel that consumes him? But where's Long acre*? In my uncle's conscience, which is three years voyage about; he that sets out upon his conscience ne'er finds the way home again; he is either swallowed in the quicksands of law-quillits, or splits upon the piles of a præmunire; yet these old fox-brain'd and ox-brow'd uncles, have still defences for their avarice, and apologies for their practises, and will thus greet our follies:

He that doth his youth expose,
To brothel, drink, and danger,
Let him that is his nearest kin,
Cheat him before a stranger.

And that's *his* uncle; 'tis a principle in usury:

* Probably the name of the estate Witgood had mortgaged to his uncle.

I dare not visit the city, there I should be too soon visited by that horrible plague, my debts, and by that means I lose a virgin's love, her portion, and her virtues: well! how should a man live now that has no living? hum! why are there not a million of men in the world, that only sojourn upon their brain, and make their wits their mercers; and am I but one amongst that million and cannot thrive upon't? any trick out of the compass of law* now would come happily to me.

Enter COURTEZAN.

Court. My love!

Wit. My loathing! hast thou been the secret consumption of my purse, and now com'st to undo my last means, my wits? wilt leave no virtue in me, and yet thou ne'er the better?
Hence, Courtezan! round-web'd Tarantula
That dryest the roses in the cheeks of youth.

Court. I have been true unto your pleasure; and all your lands thrice rack'd, were never worth the jewel which I prodigally gave you, my virginity.
Lands mortgaged may return, and more esteem'd,
But honesty once pawn'd, is ne'er redeem'd.

Wit. Forgive! I do thee wrong
To make thee sin, and then to chide thee for't.

Court. I know I am your loathing now; farewell.

Wit. Stay, best invention, stay!

Court. I that have been the secret consumption

* Not punishable by law.

of your purse, shall I stay now to undo your last means, your wits? hence, courtezan! away!

Wit. I prithee make me not mad at my own weapon: stay, (a thing few women can do, I know that, and therefore they had need wear stays;) be not contrary: dost love me? Fate has so cast it that all my means I must derive from thee.

Court. From me? be happy then;
What lies within the power of my performance,
Shall be commanded of thee.

Wit. Spoke like an honest drab! i'faith it may prove something; what trick is not an embrion at first, until a perfect shape come over it?

Court. Come, I must help; where left you? I'll proceed:
Though you beget, 'tis I must help to breed.
Speak, what is't? I'd fain conceive it.

Wit. So, so, so! thou shalt presently take the name and form upon thee of a rich country widow, four hundred a year valiant, in woods, in bullocks, in barns, and in rye-stacks; we'll to London, and to my covetous uncle.

Court. I begin to applaud thee; our states being both desperate, they are soon resolute: but how for horses?

Wit. Mass, that's true! the jest will be of some continuance; let me see; horses now, a bots on 'em! Stay, I have acquaintance with a mad Host, never yet bawd to thee; I have rins'd the whoreson's gums in mull-sack many a time and often; put but a good tale into his ear now, so it come off cleanly, and there's horse and man for us, I dare warrant thee.

Court. Arm your wits then speedily, there shall want nothing in me, either in behaviour, discourse, or fashion, that shall discredit your intended purpose.

I will so artfully disguise my wants,
And set so good a courage on my state,
That I will be believed.

Wit. Why then all's finish'd. I shall go nigh to catch that old fox mine uncle; though he make but some amends for my undoing, yet there's some comfort in't—he cannot otherwise choose (though it be but in hope to cozen me again *) but supply any hasty want that I bring to town with me; the device well and cunningly carried, the name of a rich widow, and four hundred a year in good earth, will so conjure up a kind of usurer's love in him to me, that he will not only desire my presence, which at first shall scarce be granted him, I'll keep off a purpose, but I shall find him so officious to deserve, so ready to supply; I know the state of an old man's affection so well; if his nephew be poor indeed, why he lets God alone with him; but if he be once rich, then he'll be the first man that helps him.

Court. 'Tis right the world; for in these days an old man's love to his kindred is like his kindness to his wife, 'tis always done before he comes at it.

Wit. I owe thee for that jest! begone! here's all my wealth; prepare thyself, away! I'll to mine host with all possible haste, and with the best art, and most profitable form, pour the

* Massenger probably borrowed some hints from this play for his excellent drama of the "New Way to pay Old Debts."

sweet circumstance into his ear; which shall have the gift to turn all the wax to honey.

[*Exit Court.*

How now! Oh, the right worshipful seniors of our country.

Enter TWO GENTLEMEN.

1 *Gent.* Who's that?

2 *Gent.* Oh, the common rioter; take no note of him.

Wit. You will not see me now; the comfort is ere it be long you will scarce see yourselves.

[*Exit.*

1 *Gent.* I wonder how he breathes; 'has consum'd all upon that Courtezan.

2 *Gent.* We have heard so much.

1 *Gent.* You have heard all truth: his uncle and my brother have been these three years mortal adversaries. Two old tough spirits, they seldom meet but fight, or quarrel when 'tis calmest.

I think their anger be the very fire
That keeps their age alive.

2 *Gent.* What was the quarrel, sir?

1 *Gent.* Faith about a purchase, fetching over a young heir: Master Hoard, my brother, having wasted much time in beating the bargain, what did me old Lucre, but as his conscience mov'd him, knowing the poor gentleman, step'd in between 'em, and cozen'd him himself.

2 *Gent.* And was this all, sir?

1 *Gent.* This was e'en it, sir; 'yet for all this I know no reason but the match might go forward betwixt his wife's son and my niece; what though there be a dissention between the two

old men, I see no reason it should put a difference between the two younger; 'tis as natural for old folks to fall out, as for young to fall in: a scholar comes a wooing to my niece; well, he's wise, but he's poor; her son comes a wooing to my niece; well, he's a fool, but he's rich.

2 *Gent.* Ay marry, sir.

1 *Gent.* Pray now is not a rich fool better than a poor philosopher?

2 *Gent.* One would think so, i'faith.

1 *Gent.* She now remains at London with my brother, her second uncle, to learn fashions, practice music; the voice between her lips, and the viol* between her legs, she'll be fit for a consort† very speedily; a thousand good pounds is her portion; if she marry, we'll ride up and be merry.

2 *Gent.* A match, if it be a match. [*Exeunt.*

Enter at one Door WITGOOD, *at the other* HOST.

Wit. Mine Host!

Host. Young Master Witgood.

Wit. I have been laying‡ all the town for thee.

Host. Why, what's the news, Bully Had-land?

* The *viol de gambo*—It is probably the same as is now called a *bass viol.* However inelegant, it seems to have been commonly played on by the ladies of our poet's time. Sir Roderick, in "The Return from Parnassus," (Act III. Scene II.) mentions his daughter's learning it.

† A pun seems intended between a musical performance and a married woman.

‡ The word is used, I think, in the same sense by Jack Cade in the "Second Part of Henry VI." (Act IV. Scene X.) "These five days have I hid me in these woods; and durst not peep out, for all the country is *lay'd* for me."

Wit. What geldings are in the house of thine own? answer me to that first.

Host. Why, man, why?

Wit. Mark me what I say; I'll teach thee such a tale in thine ear, that thou shalt trust me spite of thy teeth, furnish me with some money *wille nille*, and ride up with me thyself *contra voluntatem et professionem*.

Host. How! let me see this trick, and I'll say thou hast more art than a conjurer.

Wit. Dost thou joy in my advancement?

Host. Do I love sack and ginger?

Wit. Comes my prosperity desiredly to thee?

Host. Come forfeitures to a usurer, fees to an officer, punks to an host, and pigs to a parson desiredly? why then, la.

Wit. Will the report of a widow of four hundred a year, boy, make thee leap, and sing, and dance, and come to thy place again?

Host. Wilt thou command me now? I am thy spirit; conjure me into any shape.

Wit. I ha' brought her from her friends, turn'd back the horses by a sleight; not so much as one among her six men, goodly large yeomanly fellows, will she trust with this her purpose: by this light! all unman'd, regardless of her state, neglectful of vain-glorious ceremony, all for my love. Oh, 'tis a fine little voluble tongue, mine host, that wins a widow!

Host. No, 'tis a tongue with a great T, my boy, that wins a widow.

Wit. Now, sir, the case stands thus; good mine host, if thou lov'st my happiness, assist me.

Host. Command all my beasts i' th' house.

Wit. Nay, that is not all neither; pray thee take truce with thy joy, and listen to me: thou know'st I have a wealthy uncle i' th' city, somewhat the wealthier by my follies; the report of this fortune, well and cunningly carried, might be a means to draw some goodness from the usuring rascal; for I have put her in hope already of some estate that I have either in land or money; now if I be found true in neither, what may I expect but a sudden breach of our love, utter dissolution of the match, and confusion of my fortunes for ever?

Host. Wilt thou but trust the managing of thy business with me?

Wit. With thee! why, will I desire to thrive in my purpose? will I hug four hundred a year? I that know the misery of nothing? will that man wish a rich widow, that has ne'er a hole to put his head in? With thee, mine host! why believe it, sooner with thee than with a covey of counsellors.

Host. Thank you for your good report, i'faith, sir, and if I stand you not in stead, why then let an host come off *Hic et hæc hostis*, a deadly enemy to dice, drink and venery: come, where's this widow?

Wit. Hard at Park end.

Host. I'll be her serving man for once.

Wit. Why there we let off together; keep full time; my thoughts were striking then just the same number.

Host. I knew't; shall we then see our merry days again?

Wit. Our merry nights—*(aside)* which ne'er shall be more seen. [*Exeunt.*

Scene—London. Enter at different Doors old LUCRE *and old* HOARD; *Gentlemen coming between them to pacify them.*

Lamp. Nay, good Master Lucre, and you Master Hoard, anger is the wind which you're both too much troubled withal.

Hoard. Shall my adversary thus daily affront* me, ripping up the old wound of our malice which three summers could not close up, into which wound the very sight of him drops scalding lead instead of balsamum?

Lucre. Why Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, Hoard, may I not pass in the state of quietness to mine own house? answer me to that, before witness; and why? I'll refer the cause to honest even-minded gentlemen, or require the mere indifferences of the law to decide this matter: I got the purchase, true; was't not any man's case? yes; will a wise man stand as a bawd, whilst another wipes his nose of the bargain†? no: I answer no in that case.

Lamp. Nay, sweet Master Lucre.

Hoard. Was it the part of a friend—no rather of a Jew; mark what I say—when I had beaten the bush to the last bird, or, as I may term it, the price to a pound; then like a cunning usurer to come in the evening of the bargain, and glean all my hopes in a minute? to enter as it were at

* "*Affront me,*" meet me face to face. So in "The Winter's Tale, (Act V. Scene I.) And in "Hamlet:"

"That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia."

Act III. Scene I. See Stevens's note.

† See note, vol. iv. p. 110.

the back door of the purchase? for thou ne'er can'st the right way by it.

Lucre. Hast thou the conscience to tell me so without any impeachment to thyself?

Hoard. Thou that canst defeat thy own nephew, Lucre, lap his lands into bonds, and take the extremity of thy kindred's forfeitures because he's a rioter, a wast-thrift, a brothel-master, and so forth; what may a stranger expect from thee, but *vulnera dilacerata*, as the poet says, dilacerate dealing?

Lucre. Upbraidest thou me with my nephew? is all imputation laid upon me? what acquaintance have I with his follies? if he riot, 'tis he must want it; if he surfeit, 'tis he must feel it; if he drab it, 'tis he must lie by it; what's this to me?

Hoard. What's all to thee? nothing! nothing! such is the gulf of thy desire and the wolf of thy conscience: but be assured, old Pecunious Lucre, if ever fortune so bless me, that I may be at leisure to vex thee, I will pursue it with that flame of hate, spirit of malice, unrepressed wrath, that I will blast thy comforts.

Lucre. Ha! ha! ha!

Lamp. Nay, Master Hoard, you're a wise gentleman.

Hoard. I will so cross thee,——

Lucre. And I thee.

Hoard. So without mercy fret thee;——

Lucre. So monstrously oppose thee.

Hoard. Dost scoff at my just anger? Oh, that I had as much power as usury has over thee!

Lucre. Then thou wouldst have as much power as the devil has over thee.

Hoard. Toad!

Lucre. Aspic!

Hoard. Serpent!

Lucre. Viper!

Spich. Nay, gentlemen, then we must divide you per force.

Lamp. When the fire grows too unreasonably hot, there's no better way than to take off the wood.

[*Exeunt Lamp. and Spich. drawing off Lucre and Hoard different ways.*

Enter SAM *and* MONEYLOVE.

Sam. A word, good Seignior.

Money. How now, what's the news?

Sam. 'Tis given me to understand that you are a rival of mine in the love of Mistress Joyce, Master Hoard's niece; say me ay, say me no?

Money. Yes, 'tis so.

Sam. Then look to yourself, you cannot live long; I'm practising every morning; a month hence I'll challenge you.

Money. Give me your hand upon't, there's my pledge, I'll meet you. [*Strikes him and exit.*

Sam. Oh! oh! what reason had you for that, sir, to strike before the month? you knew I was not ready for you, and that made you so crank*: I am not such a coward to strike again, I warrant you. My ear has the law of her side, for it burns horribly: I will teach him to strike a naked face, the longest day of his life: 'slid! it shall cost me some money but I'll bring this box into the chancery. [*Exit.*

* "*Recoquille,*" says Weber, is defined by Cotgrave to mean, "Lustie, *cranke*, peart." It is used by Spencer, and occurs more than once in Beaumont and Fletcher.

Enter WITGOOD *and the* HOST.

Host. Fear you nothing, sir; I have lodg'd her in a house of credit, I warrant you.

Wit. Hast thou the writings?

Host. Firm, sir.

Wit. Prithee stay, and behold two the most prodigious rascals that ever slipp'd into the shape of men; Dampit, sirrah, and young Gulfe his fellow caterpillar.

Host. Dampit; sure I have heard of that Dampit.

Wit. Heard of him! why, man, he that has lost both his ears may hear of him; a famous infamous trampler of time; his own phrase: note him well, that Dampit, sirrah, he in the uneven beard and the serge cloak, is the most notorious, usuring, blasphemous, atheistical, brothel-vomiting rascal, that we have in these latter times now extant; whose first beginning was the stealing of a mastiff dog from a farmer's house.

Host. He look'd as if he would obey the commandment well when he first began with stealing.

Wit. True: the next town he came at, he set the dogs together by the ears.

Host. A sign he should follow the law, by my faith.

Wit. So it followed indeed; and being destitute of all fortunes, stak'd his mastiff against a noble, and by great fortune his dog had the day; how he made it up ten shillings, I know not;

but his own boast is, that he came to town but with ten shillings in his purse, and now is credibly worth ten thousand pounds.

Host. How the devil came he by it?

Wit. How the devil came he not by it? If you put in the devil once, riches come with a vengeance; 'has been a trampler of the law, sir, and the devil has a care of his footmen.

Enter GULFE *and* DAMPIT.

The rogue has spied me now; he nibbled me finely once too;—*(Aside)*, a pox search you!—Oh, Master Dampit!—*(Aside.)* The very loins of thee! Cry you mercy, Master Gulfe, you walk so low I promise you I saw you not, sir.

Gulfe. He that walks low walks safe, the poets tell us.

Wit. And nigher hell by a foot and a half than the rest of his fellows. But, my old Harry!

Damp. My sweet Theodorus!

Wit. 'Twas a merry world when thou cam'st to town with ten shillings in thy purse.

Damp. And now worth ten thousand pounds, my boy. Report it—Harry Dampit, a trampler of time; say he would be up in a morning, and be here with his serge gown, dash'd up to the ham in a cause; have his feet stink about Westminster Hall, and come home again; see the galleons, the galeases, the great armadas of the law; then there be hoys, and petty vessels; oars and scullers of the time; there be picklocks of the time too; then would I be here; I would trample up and down like a mule: now to the judges, *May it please your reverend honourable father-*

hoods;—then to my counsellor, *May it please your worshipful patience*;—then to the Examiner's office, *May it please your mastership's gentleness*;—then to one of the clerks, *May it please your worshipful lousiness*,—for I find him scrubbing in his cod-piece;—then to the hall again, then to the chamber again.

Wit. And when to the cellar again?

Damp. E'en when thou wilt again: tramplers of time, motions of Fleet Street, and Visions of Holborn *; here I have fees of one, there I have fees of another; my clients come about me, the fooliaminy and coxcombry of the country; I still trash'd † and trotted for other mens' causes; thus was poor Harry Dampit made rich by other's laziness, who, though they would not follow their own suits, I made 'em follow me with their purses.

Wit. Didst thou so, old Harry?

Damp. Ay, and I sous'd 'em with bills of charges, i'faith! twenty pounds a year have I brought in for boat hire, and I ne'er step'd into boat in my life.

Wit. Tramplers of time!

* I know not exactly what these *visions* were; for *motions* the reader may see the note, vol. iv. p. 181.

† Of the sense of this word, the occurrence of which is sufficiently common, there have been various opinions; but the evidence adduced by Malone is conclusive as to its use in "Othello," and some other places; although it appears to me certain that it is not used here with the meaning he assigns to it; and doubtful, indeed, that it is so used in "The Puritan," where Mary asks Sir John to let her have a coach with "a guarded lackey to run before it, and pied liveries to come *trashing* after't." Act IV. Scene I.

Damp. Ay, tramplers of time, rascals of time, bulbeggars.

Wit. Ah! thou'rt a mad old Harry. *(To Gulfe.)* Kind Master Gulfe, I am bold to renew my acquaintance.

Gulfe. I embrace it, sir. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. Scene I.

Enter Lucre.

Lucre. My adversary evermore twits me with my nephew; forsooth, my nephew? why may not a virtuous uncle have a dissolute nephew? What though he be a brotheller, a wastethrift, a common surfeiter, and, to conclude, a beggar, must sin in him, call up shame in me? Since we have no part in their follies, why should we have part in their infamies? For my strict hand toward his mortgage, that I deny not; I confess I had an uncle's pen'worth; let me see, half in half, true; I saw neither hope of his reclaiming, nor comfort in his being; and was it not then better bestowed upon his uncle, than upon one of his aunts? I need not say bawd, for every one knows what aunt stands for in the last translation?

Enter Servant.

Now, sir?

Ser. There's a country servingman, sir, attends to speak with your worship.

Lucre. I'm at best leisure now, send him in to me.

Enter Host *like a Servingman.*

Host. Bless your venerable worship.

Lucre. Welcome, good fellow.

Host. (Aside.) He calls me thief at first sight, yet he little thinks I am an Host.

Lucre. What's thy business with me?

Host. Faith, sir, I am sent from my mistress, (to any sufficient gentleman indeed), to ask advice upon a doubtful point; 'tis indifferent, sir, to whom I come, for I know none, nor did my mistress direct me to any particular man, (for she's as mere a stranger here as myself), only I found your worship within, and 'tis a thing I ever lov'd, sir, to be dispatch'd as soon as I can.

Lucre. (Aside.) A good blunt honesty; I like him well.—What is thy mistress?

Host. Faith, a country gentlewoman, and a widow, sir: yesterday was the first flight of us; but now she intends to stay till a little term business be ended.

Lucre. Her name, I prithee?

Host. It runs there in the writings, sir, among her lands; Widow Medler.

Lucre. Medler? Mass! I have ne'er heard of that widow.

Host. Yes, I warrant you, have you, sir: not the rich widow in Staffordshire?

Lucre. Cuds me! there 'tis indeed: thou hast put me into memory: there's a widow indeed; ah, that I were a bachelor again!

Host. No doubt your worship might do much then; but she's fairly promis'd to a bachelor already.

Lucre. Ah! what is he, I prithee?

Host. A country gentleman too; one whom your worship knows not, I'm sure; he has spent some few follies in his youth; but marriage, by

my faith, begins to call him home: my mistress loves him, sir, and love covers faults you know: one Master Witgood, if ever you have heard of the gentleman.

Lucre. Ha! Witgood, sayst thou?

Host. That's his name indeed, sir; my mistress is like to bring him to a goodly seat yonder; four hundred a year, by my faith.

Lucre. But I pray take me with you*.

Host. Ay, sir.

Lucre. What countryman might this young Witgood be?

Host. A Leicestershire gentleman, sir.

Lucre. (Aside.) My nephew! by the mass, my nephew! I'll fetch out more of this, i'faith! a simple country fellow, I'll work out of him.—And is that gentleman sayest thou, presently to marry her?

Host. Faith, he brought her up to town, sir; he has the best card in all the bunch for't, her heart; and I know my mistress will be married ere she go down; nay, I'll swear that, for she's none of those widows that will go down first, and be married after; she hates that I can tell you, sir.

Lucre. By my faith, sir, she is like to have a proper gentleman, and a comely; I'll give her that gift.

Host. Why, does your worship know him, sir?

Lucre. I know him! does not all the world know him? Can a man of such exquisite qualities be hid under a bushel?

* A very common phrase in the old writers. See note, vol. ii. p. 63. Swift uses it in "A Tale of a Tub."

Host. Then your worship may save me a labour, for I had a charge given me to inquire after him.

Lucre. Inquire after him? If I might counsel thee, thou shouldst ne'er trouble thyself further; enquire of him no more but of me; I'll fit thee: I grant he has been youthful; but is he not now reclaim'd? mark you that, sir: has not your mistress, think you, been wanton in her youth? If men be wags, are there not women wagtails?

Host. No doubt, sir.

Lucre. Does not he return wisest, that comes home whipp'd with his own follies?

Host. Why, very true, sir.

Lucre. The worst report you can hear of him, I can tell you, is that he has been a kind gentleman, a liberal, and a worthy: who but *lusty* Witgood, *thrice noble* Witgood?

Host. Since your worship has so much knowledge in him, can you resolve me, sir, what his living might be? my duty binds me, sir, to have a care of my mistress's estate; she has been ever a good mistress to me, though I say it; many wealthy suitors has she nonsuited for his sake; yet though her love be so fix'd, a man cannot tell whether his non-performance may help to remove it, sir: he makes us believe he has lands and living.

Lucre. Who, young Master Witgood? why, believe it, he has as goodly a fine living out yonder,—what do you call the place?

Host. Nay, I know not, i'faith.

Lucre. Hum!—see, like a beast, if I have not forgot the name:—puh! and out yonder again, goodly grown woods and fair meadows: pox

on't! I can ne'er hit of that place neither: he? why, he's Witgood of Witgood Hall; he, an unknown thing?

Host. Is he so, sir? To see how rumour will alter! trust me, sir, we heard once he had no lands, but all lay mortgag'd to an uncle he has in town here.

Lucre. Pish! 'tis a tale, 'tis a tale.

Host. I can assure you, sir, 'twas credibly reported to my mistress.

Lucre. Why do you think, i'faith, he was ever so simple to mortgage his lands to his uncle? or his uncle so unnatural to take the extremity of such a mortgage?

Host. That was my saying still, sir.

Lucre. Puh! ne'er think it.

Host. Yet that report goes current.

Lucre. Nay, then you urge me;
Cannot I tell that best that am his uncle?

Host. How, sir? what have I done!

Lucre. Why, how now! in a swoon, man?

Host. Is your worship his uncle, sir?

Lucre. Can that be any harm to you, sir?

Host. I do beseech you, sir, do me the favour to conceal it: what a beast was I to utter so much! pray, sir, do me the kindness to keep it in; I shall have my coat pull'd o'er my ears, an't should be known; for the truth is, an't please your worship, to prevent much rumour and many suitors, they intend to be married very suddenly and privately.

Lucre. And dost thou think it stands with my judgment to do them injury? must I needs say the knowledge of this marriage comes from thee? am I a fool at fifty-four? do I lack subtlety

now that have got all my wealth by it? there's a leash of angels for thee: come, let me woo thee speak; where lie they?

Host. So I might have no anger, sir——

Lucre. Passion of me! not a jot: prithee come.

Host. I would not have it known, sir, it came by my means.

Lucre. Why, am I a man of wisdom?

Host. I dare trust your worship, sir; but I am a stranger to your house; and to avoid all intelligencers, I desire your worship's ear.

Lucre. *(Aside.)* This fellow's worth a matter of trust.—Come, sir, *(Host whispers to him)*, Why now thou'rt an honest lad: ah, sirrah, nephew!

Host. Please you, sir, now I have begun with your worship, when shall I attend for your advice upon that doubtful point? I must come warily now.

Lucre. Tut! fear thou nothing; to-morrow evening shall resolve the doubt.

Host. The time shall cause my attendance.

[*Exit.*

Lucre. Fare thee well. There's more true honesty in such a country servingman, than in a hundred of our cloak companions*! I may well call 'em companions, for since blue coats have been turn'd into cloaks†, we can scarce know the man from the master.—George!

* *Companion*, I have before observed, was a common term of reproach in our author's time. See vol. iii. p. 249.

† That "*blue coats*" were once almost universally worn by servants, appears from innumerable passages in the old writers: but Fletcher seems also to allude to the custom as obsolete in "The Woman Hater," written about the same time with the present performance; where Lazarillo, describing how he would live

Enter GEORGE.

George. Anon, sir.

Lucre. List hither—*(whispers to him)*, keep the place secret; commend me to my nephew; I know no cause, tell him, but he might see his uncle.

George. I will, sir.

Lucre. And, do you hear, sir, take heed you use him with respect and duty.

George. (Aside.) Here's a strange alteration; one day he must be turn'd out like a beggar, and now he must be called in like a knight.

[*Exit.*

Lucre. Ah! sirrah, that rich widow;—four hundred a year! beside I hear she lays claim to a title to a hundred more; this falls unhappily that he should bear a grudge to me now, being likely to prove so rich. What is't tro, that he makes me a stranger for? Hum! I hope he has not so much wit to apprehend that I cozened him: he deceives me then. Good heaven! who would have thought it would ever have come to this pass? yet he's a proper gentleman, i'faith, give him his due; marry, that's his mortgage; but that I ne'er mean to give him: I'll make him rich enough in words, if that be good; and if it come to a piece of money, I will not greatly

if Fortune would give him means, observes, "My first course should be brought in *after the ancient manner*, by a score of old bleer-eyed serving-men *in long blue coats*." And in the last Act of this Play the Host enters "in a livery *cloak*." References, however, are so common to these *blue coats* in the writers of the age, that it is difficult to conceive them otherwise than common; and Lazarillo, by the "*ancient manner*," may allude only to the *number* of servants he would employ.

stick for't; there may be hope some of the widow's lands too may one day fall upon me, if things be carried wisely.

Enter GEORGE.

Now, sir, where is he?

George. He desires your worship to hold him excus'd; he has such weighty business, it commands him wholly from all men.

Lucre. Were those my nephew's words?

George. Yes, indeed, sir.

Lucre. (Aside.) When men grow rich they grow proud too, I perceive that; he would not have sent me such an answer once within this twelvemonth: see what 'tis when a man comes to his lands.—Return to him again, sir; tell him his uncle desires his company for an hour; I'll trouble him but an hour say; 'tis for his own good tell him: and, do you hear, sir, put *worship* upon him: go to! do as I bid you; he's like to be a gentleman of worship very shortly.

George. (Aside.) This is good sport, i'faith.

[*Exit.*

Lucre. Troth, he uses his uncle discourteously now: can he tell what I may do for him? goodness may come from me in a minute, that comes not in seven year again: he knows my humour; I am not so usually good; 'tis no small thing that draws kindness from me, he may know that an he will. The chief cause that invites me to do him most good, is the sudden astonishing of old Hoard, my adversary: how pale his malice will look at my nephew's advancement; with what a dejected spirit he will behold his for-

tunes, whom but last day he proclaim'd *rioter*, penurious *make-shift*, despised *brothel-master:* Ha! ha! 'twill do me more secret joy than my last purchase, more precious comfort than all these widow's revenues.

Enter GEORGE, *followed by* WITGOOD.

Now, sir.

George. With much entreaty he's at length come, sir. [*Exit.*

Lucre. Oh, nephew! let me salute you, sir; you're welcome, nephew.

Wit. Uncle, I thank you.

Lucre. You've a fault, nephew; you're a stranger here: well, heaven give you joy!

Wit. Of what, sir?

Lucre. Hah, we can hear: you might have known your uncle's house, i'faith, you and your widow: go to! you were to blame; if I may tell you so without offence.

Wit. How could you hear of that, sir?

Lucre. Oh, pardon me; it was your will to have it kept from me, I perceive now.

Wit. Not for any defect of love, I protest, uncle.

Lucre. Oh, 'twas unkindness, nephew; fie, fie, fie!

Wit. I am sorry you take it in that sense, sir.

Lucre. Puh! you cannot colour it, i'faith, nephew.

Wit. Will you but hear what I can say in my just excuse, sir?

Lucre. Yes, faith, will I, and welcome.

Wit. You that know my danger i' th' city, sir,

so well, how great my debts are, and how extreme my creditors, could not out of pure judgment, sir, have wish'd us hither.

Lucre. Mass! a firm reason indeed.

Wit. Else my uncle's house! why 't had been the only make-match.

Lucre. Nay, and thy credit.

Wit. My credit? nay, my countenance: pish! nay, I know, uncle, you would have wrought it so by your wit, you would have made her believe in time the whole house had been mine.

Lucre. Ay, and most of the goods too.

Wit. La you there! well, let 'em all prate what they will, there's nothing like the bringing of a widow to one's uncle's house.

Lucre. Nay, let nephews be rul'd as they list, they shall find their uncle's house the most natural place when all's done.

Wit. There they may be bold.

Lucre. 'Life! they may do any thing there, man, and fear neither beadle nor somner*; an uncle's house! a very coal harbour†. Sirrah,

* A *somner*, or *sompner*, was an officer of the ecclesiastical court, whose duty it was to summon delinquents to appear there: he is now called an apparitor. If we believe Chaucer's description of the one, in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, intended as a portraiture of all, they were something worse than neglectful in the performance of their duties.

† I regret I have it not in my power to furnish the reader with full explanations of the many references to this place, that will be found throughout this play: all that Stow informs us is, that there was formerly a large house, situated in Allhallows the Less, called by this name, which passed successively from the Heralds' Col., to whom it was granted by Richard III., through Tonstal, Bishop of Durham, to the Earls of Shrewsbury; that it was afterwards pulled down and many small tenements built in

I'll touch thee near now: hast thou so much interest in thy widow, that by a token thou couldst presently send for her?

Wit. Troth, I think I can, uncle.

Lucre. Go to! let me see that.

Wit. Pray command one of your men hither, uncle.

Lucre. George!

Enter GEORGE.

George. Here, sir.

Lucre. Attend my nephew.—*(Wit. whispers to George apart.)* I love a life to prattle with a rich widow; 'tis pretty, methinks, when our tongues go together: and then to promise much and perform little; I love that sport a life, i'faith! yet I am in the mood now to do my nephew some good, if he take me handsomely.—What, have you dispatch'd?

Wit. I ha' sent, sir.

Lucre. Yet I must condemn you of unkindness, nephew.

Wit. Heaven forbid, uncle!

Lucre. Yes, faith, must I: say your debts be many, your creditors importunate, yet the kind-

its stead. From the passage in the text, and others scattered throughout this drama, I conclude it was a commonly reputed sanctuary; a privilege which it perhaps possessed, or was supposed to possess, as having been formerly an episcopal residence. From other passages it may be inferred that it was notorious as a place where marriages were solemnised hastily, and without the proper forms; such as the Fleet Prison and Keith's Chapel were for some time previously to the passing the marriage act. The only allusion I recollect to it among the dramatic writers of the time is by Goshawk, in "The Roaring Girl" of our author, and he only puns on it.

ness of a thing is all, nephew; you might have sent me word on't without the least danger or prejudice to your fortunes.

Wit. Troth, I confess it, uncle; I was to blame there; but indeed my intent was to have clapp'd it up suddenly, and so have broke forth like a joy to my friends, and a wonder to the world; beside, there's a trifle of a forty pound matter toward the setting of me forth; my friends should ne'er have known on't; I meant to make shift for that myself.

Lucre. How, nephew! let me not hear such another word again, I beseech you: shall I be beholding to you?

Wit. To me? Alas! what do you mean, uncle?

Lucre. I charge you, upon my love, you trouble nobody but myself.

Wit. You've no reason for that, uncle.

Lucre. Troth, I'll ne'er be friends with you while you live, an you do.

Wit. Nay, an you say so, uncle, here's my hand; I will not do't.

Lucre. Why, well said! there's some [good] in thee when thou wilt be rul'd; I'll make it up fifty, i'faith, because I see thee so reclaim'd. Peace! here comes my wife with Sam, her t'other husband's son.

Enter LUCRE'S WIFE *and* SAM.

Wit. Good aunt.

[*Lucre and his Wife converse apart.*

Sam. Cousin Witgood, I rejoice in my salute;

you're most welcome to this noble city, govern'd with the sword in the scabbard.

Wit. (Aside.) And the wit in the pommel. Good Master Sam Freedom, I return thy salute.

Lucre By the mass she's coming, wife; let me see now how thou wilt entertain her.

Wife. I hope I am not to learn, sir, to entertain a widow; 'tis not so long ago since I was one myself.

Enter COURTEZAN.

Wit. Uncle.

Lucre. She's come indeed.

Wit. My uncle was desirous to see you, widow, and I presumed to invite you.

Court. The presumption was nothing, Master Witgood: is this your uncle, sir?

Lucre. Marry am I, sweet widow; and his good uncle he shall find me; ay, by this smack that I give thee *(kisses her)*, thou'rt welcome: Wife, bid the widow welcome the same way again.

Sam. I am a gentleman now too by my father's occupation, and I see no reason but I may kiss a widow by my father's copy; truly, I think the charter is not against it; surely these are the words, *The son once a gentleman may revel it, though his father were a dauber;* 'tis about the fifteenth page: I'll to her.

[*Sam offers to kiss the Court. who repulses him.*

Lucre. You're not very busy now; a word with thee, sweet widow. [*They converse apart.*

Sam. Coads nigs! I was never so disgrac'd since the hour my mother whipp'd me.

Lucre. (Aside to the Court.) Beside, I have no child of mine own to care for; she's my second wife, old, past bearing; clap sure to him, widow; he's like to be my heir, I can tell you.

Court. Is he so, sir?

Lucre. He knows it already, and the knave's proud on't: jolly rich widows have been offer'd him here i' th' city, great merchants' wives; and do you think he will once look upon 'em? forsooth, he'll none: you are beholding to him i' th' country then, ere we could be; nay, I'll hold a wager, widow, if he were once known to be in town, he would be presently sought after; nay, and happy were they that could catch him first.

Court. I think so.

Lucre. Oh, there would be such running to and fro, widow, he would not pass the streets for 'em: he'd be took up in one great house or other presently: fah! they know he has it, and must have it: you see this house here, widow; this house and all comes to him: goodly rooms, ready furnish'd, ceil'd with plaister of Paris, and all hung about with cloth of arras.—Nephew.

Wit. Sir.

Lucre. Show the widow your house; carry her into all the rooms, and bid her welcome; you shall see, widow. Nephew, *(aside to him)*, strike all sure above an thou be'st a good boy.—Ah!

Wit. Alas, sir, I know not how she would take it.

Lucre. The right way, I'll warrant t'ye: a pox! art an ass? would I were in thy stead: get you up, I am asham'd of you; so! *(Exit Wit. and Court.)* Let 'em agree as they will now: many

a match has been struck up in my house o' this fashion: let 'em try all manner of ways, still there's nothing like an uncle's house to strike the stroke in. I'll hold my wife in talk a little. Now, Jenny, your son there goes a wooing to a poor gentlewoman but of [a] thousand portion; see my nephew, a lad of less hope, strikes at four hundred a year in good rubbish.

Wife. Well, we must do as we may, sir.

Lucre. (Aside.) I'll have his money ready told for him against he comes down: let me see too, by the mass! I must present the widow with some jewel, a good piece of plate, or such a device; 'twill hearten her on well; I have a very fair standing cup; and a good high standing cup will please a widow above all other pieces. [*Exit.*

Wife. Do you mock us with your nephew? I have a plot in my head, son; i'faith, husband, to cross you!

Sam. Is it a tragedy plot, or a comedy plot, good mother?

Wife. 'Tis a plot shall vex him: I charge you on my blessing, son Sam, that you presently withdraw the action of your love from Master Hoard's niece.

Sam. How! mother?

Wife. Nay, I have a plot in my head, i'faith: here, take this chain of gold, and this fair diamond, dog me the widow home to her lodging, and at thy best opportunity fasten 'em both upon her: nay, I have a reach; I can tell you thou art known what thou art, son, among the right worshipful all the twelve companies.

Sam. Truly I thank 'em for it.

Wife. He! he's a scab to thee; and so certify her thou hast two hundred a year of thyself, besides thy good parts;—a proper person, and a lovely.—If I were a widow I could find in my heart to have thee myself, son; ay, from 'em all.

Sam. Thank you for your good will, mother; but, indeed, I had rather have a stranger; and if I woo her not in that violent fashion, that I will make her be glad to take these gifts ere I leave her, let me never be called the heir of your body.

Wife. Nay, I know there's enough in you, son, if you once come to put it forth.

Sam. I'll quickly make a bolt or a shaft on't*.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter HOARD *and* MONEYLOVE.

Money. Faith, Master Hoard, I have bestowed many months in the suit of your niece, such was the dear love I ever bore to her virtues; but since she hath so extremely denied me, I am to lay out for my fortunes elsewhere.

Hoard. Heaven forbid but you should, sir; I ever told you my niece stood otherwise affected.

Money. I must confess you did, sir; yet in regard of my great loss of time, and the zeal with which I sought your niece, shall I desire one favour of your worship.

* This is a proverbial expression, and is enumerated by Ray in his Collection of Proverbial Phrases. The meaning is, that he would immediately try his fortune with the widow, and either be rejected or accepted. The same expression is used by Slender in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," Act III. Scene IV. See notes on the passage.

Hoard. In regard of those two 'tis hard but you shall, sir.

Money. I shall rest grateful: 'tis not full three hours, sir, since the happy rumour of a rich country widow came to my hearing.

Hoard. How! a rich country widow?

Money. Four hundred a year landed.

Hoard. Yea?

Money. Most firm, sir; and I have learnt her lodging: here my suit begins, sir; if I might but entreat your worship to be a countenance for me, and speak a good word, (for your words will pass), I nothing doubt but I might set fair for the widow; nor shall your labour end altogether in thanks; two hundred angels——

Hoard. So, so! what suitors has she?

Money. There lies the comfort, sir; the report of her is yet but a whisper; and only solicited by young riotous Witgood, nephew to your mortal adversary.

Hoard. Ha! art certain he's her suitor?

Money. Most certain, sir; and his uncle very industrious to beguile the widow, and make up the match.

Hoard. So! very good.

Money. Now, sir, you know this young Witgood is a spendthrift, dissolute fellow.

Hoard. A very rascal.

Money. A midnight surfeiter.

Hoard. The spume of a brothel-house.

Money. Which being well told in your worship's phrase, may both heave him out of her mind, and drive a fair way for me to the widow's affections.

Hoard. Attend me about five.

Money. With my best care, sir. [*Exit.*

Hoard. Fool, thou hast left thy treasure with a thief, to trust a widower with a suit in love. Happy revenge, I hug thee! I have not only the means laid before me, extremely to cross my adversary, and confound the last hopes of his nephew, but thereby to enrich my state, augment my revenues, and build mine own fortunes greater; ha! ha!

I'll mar your phrase, o'erturn your flatteries,
Undo your windings, policies, and plots,
Fall like a secret, and dispatchful plague,
On your secured comforts. Why I am able
To buy three of Lucre; thrice outbid him,
Let my out-monies be reckoned and all.

Enter Three of WITGOOD'S CREDITORS: HOARD *retires and listens.*

1 *Cred.* I am glad of this news.

2 *Cred.* So are we, by my faith.

3 *Cred.* Young Witgood will be a gallant again now.

Hoard. Peace!

1 *Cred.* I promise you, Master Cockpit, she's a mighty rich widow.

2 *Cred.* Who, widow Medler? she lies open to much rumour.

3 *Cred.* Four hundred a year they say in very good land.

1 *Cred.* Oh, sir, there's policy in that to prevent better suitors.

3 *Cred.* He owes me a hundred pounds, and I protest I ne'er look'd for a penny.

1 *Cred.* He little dreams of our coming; he'll wonder to see his creditors upon him.

[*Exeunt Creditors.*

Hoard. Good! his creditors I'll follow; this makes for me: all know the widow's wealth, and 'tis known I can estate her fairly, and I will.

In this one chance shines a twice happy fate,
I both deject my foe, and raise my state.

[*Exit.*

ACT III. Scene I.

Enter Witgood *with his* Creditors.

Wit. Why, alas! my creditors, could you find no other time to undo me but now? rather your malice appears in this than the justness of the debt.

1 *Cred.* Master Witgood, I have forborne my money long.

Wit. I pray speak low, sir; what do you mean?

2 *Cred.* We hear you are to be married suddenly to a rich country widow.

Wit. What can be kept so close but your creditors hear on't! well, 'tis a lamentable state, that our chiefest afflictors should first hear of our fortunes! Why, this is no good course, i'faith, sirs; if ever you hope to be satisfied, why do you seek to confound the means that should work it? there's neither piety nor policy in that: shine favourably now; why, I may rise and spread again, to your great comforts.

1 *Cred.* He says true, i'faith.

Wit. Remove me now, and I consume for ever*.

2 *Cred.* Sweet gentleman!

Wit. How can it thrive which from the sun you sever?

3 *Cred.* It cannot, indeed.

Wit. Oh, then show patience! I shall have enough to satisfy you all.

* This and the next speech of Witgood's form a couplet, and are, I am inclined to think, a quotation.

1 *Cred.* Ay, if we could be content, a shame take us!

Wit. For look you; I am but newly sure yet to the widow, and what a rend might this discredit make? within these three days will I bind you lands for your securities.

1 *Cred.* No, good Master Witgood.
Would 'twere as much as we dare trust you with.

Wit. I know you have been kind; however now, either by wrong report, or false incitement, your gentleness is injur'd: in such a state as this a man cannot want foes.
If on the sudden he begins to rise,
No man that lives can count his enemies.
You had some intelligence, I warrant you, from an ill-willer.

2 *Cred.* Faith, we heard you brought up a rich widow, sir, and were suddenly to marry her.

Wit. Ah! why there it was: I knew 'twas so: but since you are so well resolv'd of my faith toward you, let me be so much favour'd of you, I beseech you all——

All. Oh, it shall not need, i'faith, sir!

Wit. As to lie still awhile, and bury my debts in silence, till I be fully possess'd of the widow; for the truth is, (I may tell you as my friends),—

All. Oh—o—o—

Wit. I am to raise a little money in the city, toward the setting forth of myself, for mine own credit, and your comfort: now if my former debts should be divulg'd, all hope of my proceedings were quite extinguish'd.

1 *Cred.* *(Aside to Wit.)* Do you hear, sir, (I may deserve your custom hereafter), pray let my

money be accepted before a stranger's: here's forty pounds I receiv'd as I came to you; if that may stand you in any stead make use on't. *(Offers him money, which he at first declines.)* Nay, pray, sir; 'tis at your service.

Wit. You do so ravish me with kindness, that I am constrained to play the maid, and take it.

1 *Cred.* Let none of them see it, I beseech you.

Wit. Fah!

1 *Cred.* I hope I shall be first in your remembrance after the marriage rites.

Wit. Believe it firmly.

1 *Cred.* So:—what, do you walk, sirs?

2 *Cred.* I go. *(Aside to Wit.)* Take no care, sir, for money to furnish you; within this hour I'll send you sufficient.—Come, Master Cockpit, we both stay for you.

3 *Cred.* I ha' lost a ring, i'faith; I'll follow you presently—*(Exeunt 1st and 2d Cred.)*—but you shall find it, sir; I know your youth and expences have disfurnish'd you of all jewels; there's a ruby of twenty pounds price, sir, bestow it upon your widow—*(Offers him the ring which, at first declining, he afterwards accepts)*—What, man! 'twill call up her blood to you; beside, if I might so much work with you, I would not have you beholding to those blood-suckers for any money.

Wit. Not I, believe it.

3 *Cred.* They're a brace of cut-throats.

Wit. I know 'em.

3 *Cred.* Send a note of all your wants to my shop, and I'll supply you instantly.

Wit. Say you so? why, here's my hand then; no man living shall do't but thyself.

3 *Cred.* Shall I carry it away from 'em both, then?

Wit. I'faith shalt thou.

3 *Cred.* Troth, then, I thank you, sir. [*Exit.*

Wit. Welcome, good Master Cockpit.—Ha! ha! ha! why is not this better now than lying a-bed? I perceive there's nothing conjures up wit sooner than poverty, and nothing lays it down sooner than wealth and letchery: this has some savour yet. Oh, that I had the mortgage from mine uncle as sure in possession as these trifles! I would forswear brothels at noon-day, and muscadine and eggs at midnight.

Enter COURTEZAN.

Court. Master Witgood, where are you?

Wit. Holla!

Court. Rich news!

Wit. Would 'twere all in plate.

Court. There's some in chains and jewels: I am so haunted with suitors, Master Witgood, I know not which to dispatch first.

Wit. You have the better term*, by my faith.

Court. Among the number one Master Hoard, an ancient gentleman.

Wit. Upon my life my uncle's adversary.

Court. It may well hold so, for he rails on you, Speaks shamefully of him.

Wit. As I could wish it.

Court. I first denied him, but so cunningly,
It rather promised him assured hopes,
Than any loss of labour.

Wit. Excellent!

* Ladies of easy virtue were in the time of our poet frequently called *termers*, from their visiting the city when the Courts of Justice were open, and the Inns of Court filled with young lawyers: to this, I conceive, Witgood alludes.

Court. I expect him every hour with gentlemen, With whom he labours to make good his words, To approve you riotous, your state consum'd, your uncle——

Wit. Wench, make up thy own fortunes now; do thyself a good turn once in thy days; he's rich in money, moveables, and land: marry him! he's an old doating fool, and that's worth all—marry him! 'twould be a great comfort to me to see thee do well, i'faith—marry him! 'twould ease my conscience well to see thee well bestow'd; I have a care of thee, i'faith.

Court. Thanks, sweet Master Witgood.

Wit. I reach at farther happiness: first, I am sure it can be no harm to thee, and there may happen goodness to me by it; prosecute it well; let's send up for our wits, now we require their best and most pregnant assistance.

Court. Step in, I think I hear 'em.

[*Witgood and Courtezan retire.*

Enter HOARD *and* GENTLEMEN, *meeting the* HOST, *as Servant.*

Hoard. Art thou the widow's man? by my faith, she has a company of proper men then.

Host. I am the worst of six, sir; good enough for blue-coats.

Hoard. Hark, hither: I hear say thou art in most credit with her.

Host. Not so, sir.

Hoard. Come, come, thou art modest; there's a brace of royals; prithee help me to the speech of her. [*Gives him money.*

Host. I'll do what I may, sir, always saving myself harmless.

Hoard. Go to! do't, I say; thou shalt hear better from me.

Host. (Aside.) Is not this a better place than five mark a year standing wages? say a man had but three such clients in a day, methinks he might make a poor living on't; besides, I was never brought up with so little honesty to refuse any man's money; never: what gulls there are o' this side the world! now know I the widow's mind; none but my young master comes in her clutches: ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Hoard. Now, my dear gentlemen, stand firmly to me; you know his follies and my worth.

1 *Gentlem.* We do, sir.

2 *Gentlem.* But, Master Hoard, are you sure he is not i' th' house now?

Hoard. Upon my honesty, I choose this time
A purpose, fit; the spendthrift is abroad;
Assist me; here she comes. Now, my sweet widow. [*Kisses her.*

Enter COURTEZAN.

Court. You're welcome, Master Hoard.

Hoard. Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, dispatch. [*Gent. kiss her.*

I am come, widow, to prove those my words
Neither of envy sprung, nor of false tongues,
But such as their deserts and actions
Do merit and bring forth; all which these gentlemen,
(Well known, and better reputed), will confess.

Court. I cannot tell
How my affections may dispose of me;
But surely if they find him so desertless,
They'll have that reason to withdraw themselves;

And therefore, gentlemen, I do entreat you,
As you are fair in reputation,
And in appearing form, so shine in truth,
(I am a widow, and, alas! you know,
Soon overthrown; 'tis a very small thing
That we withstand, our weakness is go great:)
Be partial unto neither, but deliver
Without affection your opinion.

Hoard. And that will drive it home.

Court. Nay, I beseech your silence, Master Hoard,
You are a party.

Hoard. Widow, not a word.

1 *Gentlem.* The better first to work you to belief,
Know neither of us owe him flattery,
Nor t'other malice; but unbribed censure,
So help us our best fortunes*!

Court. It suffices.

1 *Gentlem.* That Witgood is a riotous, undone man,
Imperfect both in fame, and in estate,
His debts wealthier than he, and executions
In wait for his due body, we'll maintain
With our best credit, and our dearest blood.

Court. Nor land, nor living say you? Pray take heed
You do not wrong the gentleman.

1 *Gentlem.* What we speak
Our lives and means are ready to make good.

Court. Alas, how soon are we poor souls beguil'd!

2 *Gentlem.* And for his uncle——

* The declaration of this gentleman somewhat resembles the oath taken by grand jurymen respecting their presentations, and was probably formed on that model.

Hoard. Let that come to me.
His uncle's a severe extortioner;
A tyrant at a forfeiture; greedy of other's miseries;
One that would undo his brother, nay,
Swallow up his father, if he could,
Within the fathoms of his conscience.

1 *Gentlem.* Nay, believe it, widow,
You had not only match'd yourself to wants,
But in an evil and unnatural stock.

Hoard. *(Aside to Gentlem.)* Follow hard, gentlemen, follow hard.

Court. Is my love so deceiv'd? Before you all
I do renounce him; on my knees I vow
[*Kneeling.*
He ne'er shall marry me.

Wit. *(Peeping out.)* Heaven knows he never meant it!

Hoard. *(Aside to* 1 *Gentlem.)* There, take her at the bound.

1 *Gentlem.* Then with a new and pure affection,
Behold yon gentleman; grave, kind, and rich,
A match worthy yourself; esteeming him
You do regard your state.

Hoard. *(Aside to him.)* I'll make her a jointure, say.

1 *Gentlem.* He can join land to land, and will possess you
Of what you can desire.

2 *Gentlem.* Come, widow, come!

Court. The world is so deceitful.

1 *Gentlem.* There 'tis deceitful,
Where flattery, want, and imperfection lies;
But none of these in him: pish!

Court. Pray, sir.

1 *Gentlem.* Come, you widows are ever most

backward when you should do yourselves most good; but were it to marry a chin not worth a hair now, then you would be forward enough: come, clap hands—a match.

Hoard. With all my heart, widow: *(Hoard and Court. shake hands.)* Thanks, gentlemen! I will deserve your labour, and—*(to Court.)* thy love.

Court. Alas! you love not widows but for wealth;
I promise you I ha' nothing, sir.

Hoard. Well said, widow, well said; thy love is all I seek before these gentlemen.

Court. Now I must hope the best.

Hoard. My joys are such they want to be express'd.

Court. But, Master Hoard, one thing I must remember you of, before these gentlemen, your friends; how shall I suddenly avoid the loath'd soliciting of that perjur'd Witgood, and his tedious dissembling uncle? who this very day hath appointed a meeting for the same purpose too; where, had not truth come forth, I had been utterly undone; utterly undone!

Hoard. What think you of that, gentlemen?

1st *Gentlem.* 'Twas well devised.

Hoard. Hark thee, widow; train out young Witgood single, hasten him thither with thee, somewhat before the hour, where at the place appointed, these gentlemen and myself will wait the opportunity, when, by some sleight removing him from thee, we'll suddenly enter and surprize thee, carry thee away by boat to Coal-Harbour, have a priest ready, and there clap it up instantly: how lik'st it, widow?

Court. In that it pleases you, it likes me well.

Hoard. I'll kiss thee for those words. (*Kisses her.*) Come, gentlemen,
Still must I live a suitor to your favours,
Still to your aid beholding.

1 *Gentlem.* We're engaged, sir;
'Tis for our credits now to see't well ended.

Hoard. 'Tis for our honours, gentlemen; nay, look to't:
Not only in joy, but I in wealth excel;
No more sweet *widow*, but, sweet *wife*, farewell.
[*Exeunt.*

Court. Farewell, sir.

Enter WITGOOD.

Wit. Oh! for more scope; I could laugh eternally! Give you joy, Mistress Hoard, I promise* your fortune was good; forsooth, you've fell upon wealth enough, and there's young gentlemen enow to help you to the rest: now it requires our wits; carry thyself but heedfully now, and we are both——

Enter HOST.

Host. Master Witgood, your uncle.

Wit. Cuds me! remove thyself awhile; I'll serve for him. [*Exeunt Court. and Host.*

Enter LUCRE.

Lucre. Nephew, good morrow, nephew.

Wit. The same to you, kind uncle.

* *Promise* here means simply, *assurance;* as in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakspeare, where Bottom says,
"Will not the ladies be afraid of the lion?
I fear it, I *promise you.*"

Lucre. How fares the widow? does the meeting hold?

Wit. Oh, no question of that, sir.

Lucre. I'll strike the stroke then for thee; no more delays*.

Wit. The sooner the better, uncle: oh, she's mightily follow'd.

Lucre. And yet so little rumour'd?

Wit. Mightily! here comes one old gentleman, and he'll make her a jointure of three hundred a year, forsooth; another wealthy suitor will estate his son in his lifetime, and make him weigh down the widow; here a merchant's son will possess her with no less than three goodly lordships at once, which were all pawns to his father.

Lucre. Peace! nephew, let me hear no more of 'em; it mads me! thou shalt prevent 'em all; no words to the widow of my coming hither! let me see now—'tis upon nine; before twelve, nephew, we will have the bargain struck, we will, faith, boy.

Wit. Oh, my precious uncle! [*Exeunt.*

Enter HOARD *and* NIECE.

Hoard. Niece, sweet niece, prithee have a care to my house; I leave all to thy discretion: be content to dream awhile, I'll have a husband for thee shortly; put that care upon me, wench, for in choosing wives or husbands I am only fortunate; I have that gift given me. [*Exit.*

Niece. But 'tis not likely you should choose for me,

* The original reads, "no more *days*."

Since nephew to you chiefest enemy,
Is he whom I affect: but, oh, forgetful!
Why dost thou flatter thy affections so,
With name of him, that for a widow's bed
Neglects thy purer love: can it be so,
Or does report dissemble? How now, sir?

Enter GEORGE.

George. A letter, with which came a private charge. [*Exit.*

Niece. Therein thank your care.—I know this hand——

(Reads.) Dearer than sight, what the world reports of me, yet believe not; rumour will alter shortly; be thou constant; I am still the same that I was in love, and I hope to be the same in fortunes. Theodorus Witgood.

I am resolv'd! no more shall fear or doubt
Raise their pale powers to keep affection out.
[*Exit.*

Enter, with a DRAWER, HOARD *and Three* GENTLEMEN.

Draw. You're very* welcome, gentlemen. Dick, show those gentlemen the pomgranate there.

Hoard. Hist!

Draw. Up those stairs, gentlemen.

Hoard. Hist, Drawer!

Draw. Anon, sir!

Hoard. Prithee ask at the bar if a gentlewoman came not in lately.

Draw. William, at the bar, did you see any

* "*Very*" is only in the first quarto.

gentlewoman come in lately? Speak you aye, speak you no.

(Within.) No, none came in yet but Mistress Florence.

Draw. He says none came in yet, sir, but one Mistress Florence.

Hoard. What is that Florence? a widow?

Draw. Yes, a *Dutch* widow.

Hoard. How?

Draw. That's an English drab, sir: give your worship good morrow. [*Exit.*

Hoard. A merry knave, i'faith! I shall remember a *Dutch* widow the longest day of my life.

1 *Gentlem.* Did not I use most art to win the widow?

2 *Gentlem.* You shall pardon me for that, sir; Master Hoard knows I took her at best 'vantage.

Hoard. What's that, sweet gentleman, what's that?

2 *Gentlem.* He will needs bear me down, that his art only wrought with the widow most.

Hoard. Oh, you did both well, gentlemen, you did both well, I thank you.

1 *Gentlem.* I was the first that mov'd her.

Hoard. You were, i'faith.

2 *Gentlem.* But it was I that took her at the bound.

Hoard. Ay, that was you; faith, gentlemen, 'tis right.

3 *Gentlem.* I boasted least, but 'twas I joined their hands.

Hoard. By the mass, I think he did; you did

all well, gentlemen, you did all well; contend no more.

1 *Gentlem.* Come, yon room's fittest.

Hoard. True, 'tis next the door. [*Exeunt.*

Enter WITGOOD, COURTEZAN *and* HOST, DRAWER *meeting them.*

Draw. You're very welcome; please you walk up stairs; cloth's laid, sir.

Court. Up stairs! troth, I am very weary, Master Witgood.

Wit. Rest yourself here awhile, widow; we'll have a cup of muscadine in this little room.

Draw. A cup of muscadine? You shall have the best, sir.

Wit. But do you hear, sirrah?

Draw. Do you call? anon, sir!

Wit. What is there provided for dinner?

Draw. I cannot readily tell you, sir; if you please you may go into the kitchen and see yourself, sir; many gentlemen of worship do use to do it, I assure you, sir.

Host. A pretty familiar prigging* rascal, he has his part without book.

Wit. Against you are ready to drink to me, widow, I'll be present to pledge you. [*Exit.*

Court. Nay, I commend your care, 'tis done well of you. Ass! what have I forgot!

Host. What, mistress?

Court. I slipp'd my wedding-ring off when I wash'd, and left it at my lodging; prithee run,

* *Prig*, in the cant language of that age, meant *thief*, or pickpocket. It is found in Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher.

I shall be sad without it. *(Exit Hast.)* So! he's gone. Boy!

Boy. Anon, forsooth.

Court. Come hither, sirrah; learn secretly if one Master Hoard, an ancient gentleman, be about house.

Boy. I heard such a one nam'd.

Court. Commend me to him.

Enter HOARD *and* GENTLEMEN.

Hoard. Ay, boy *, do thy commendations.

Court. Oh, you come well: away! to boat! begone!

Hoard. Thus wise men are reveng'd, give two for one. [*Exeunt.*

Enter WITGOOD *and* VINTNER.

Wit. I must request you, sir, to show extraordinary care, my uncle comes with gentlemen, his friends, and 'tis upon a making †.

Vint. Is it so?
I'll give especial charge, good Master Witgood.
May I be bold to see her?

Wit. Who? the widow?
With all my heart, i'faith, I'll bring you to her.

* Both the quartos read, "*I bee* do thy commendations."

† From the context, and what follows, there is no doubt that the meaning is, "*it is for the purpose of concluding upon a marriage.*" Perhaps we should read, "a making *up*," as this expression is used in the same sense in the "Scornful Lady" of Beaumont and Fletcher, (Act V. Scene II.) where Abigail tells her mistress,—"I do fear there is a *making up* there, for I heard the servants (as I past by some) whisper such a thing; and as I came back through the hall, there were two or three clerks writing great conveyances in haste, which, they said, were for their mistress's jointure."

Vint. If she be a Staffordshire gentlewoman, 'tis much if I know her not.

Wit. How now! boy! Drawer!

Vint. Hie!

Boy. Do you call, sir?

Wit. Went the gentlewoman up that was here?

Boy. Up, sir? she went out.

Wit. Out, sir?

Boy. Out, sir: one Master Hoard, with a guard of gentlemen, carried her out at back door a pretty while since, sir.

Wit. Hoard? death and darkness! Hoard?

Enter HOST.

Host. The devil of ring I can find.

Wit. How now! what news? where's the widow?

Host. My mistress? is she not here, sir?

Wit. More madness yet!

Host. She sent me for a ring.

Wit. A plot! a plot! to boat! she's stole away.

Host. What?

Enter LUCRE *with* GENTLEMEN.

Wit. Follow! enquire old Hoard, my uncle's adversary. [*Exit Host.*

Lucre. Nephew, what's that?

Wit. Thrice miserable wretch!

Lucre. Why, what's the matter?

Vint. The widow's borne away, sir.

Lucre. Ha! passion of me! a heavy welcome, gentlemen.

1 *Gentlem.* The widow gone?

Lucre. Who durst attempt it?

Wit. Who but old Hoard, my uncle's adversary?
Lucre. How!
Wit. With his confederates.
Lucre. Hoard, my deadly enemy? Gentlemen, stand to me,
I will not bear it; 'tis in hate of me;
That villain seeks my shame, nay, thirsts* my blood;
He owes me mortal malice.
I'll spend my wealth on this despiteful plot,
Ere he shall cross me and my nephew thus.
Wit. So maliciously!

Enter Host.

Lucre. How now, you treacherous rascal?
Host. That's none of my name, sir.
Wit. Poor soul! he knew not on't.
Lucre. I'm sorry. I see then 'twas a mere plot.
Host. I trac'd 'em nearly——
Wit. Well?
Host. And hear for certain they have took Coal Harbour.
Lucre. The devil's sanctuary!
They shall not rest, I'll pluck her from his arms.
Kind and dear gentlemen,
If ever I had seat within your brèasts——
1 *Gentlem.* No more, good sir; it is a wrong to us,
To see you injur'd in a cause so just;
We'll spend our lives but we will right our friends.
Lucre. Honest and kind! come, we've delay'd too long:
Nephew, take comfort; a just cause is strong.
[*Exeunt Lucre and friends.*

* The quartos read, "*thrifts.*"

Wit. That's all my comfort, uncle. Ha! ha! ha!
Now may events fall luckily and well;
He that ne'er strives, says wit shall ne'er excel.

Enter DAMPIT, *the Usurer, drunk.*

Damp. When did I say my prayers? In anno 88, when the great armada was coming, and in anno 89*, when the great thunder and lightning was; I prayed heartily then, i'faith, to overthrow Poovies' new buildings; I kneeled by my great iron chest I remember.

Enter AUDREY.

Aud. Master Dampit, one may hear you before they see you; you keep sweet hours, Master Dampit, we were all a-bed three hours ago.

Damp. Audrey!

Aud. Oh, you're a rare fine gentleman.

Damp. So I am, i'faith, and a fine scholar: do you use to go to bed so early, Audrey?

Aud. Call you this early, Master Dampit?

Damp. Why, is't not one of clock i' th' morning? is not that early enough? fetch me a glass of fresh beer.

Aud. Here, I have warm'd your nightcap for you, Master Dampit.

Damp. Draw it on then; I am very weak,

* Both the quartos read, "99;" but Stow does not mention any *very* great storm in that year, although he has noticed one or two; whereas in the year 1589, he observes, that on "The 1st August, at night, was the greatest lightning and thunder that had, at any time, bin seene or heard about London in the memory of any man living; and yet, thankes be given to God, little hurt heard of."

truly, I have not eaten so much as the bulk of an egg these three days.

Aud. You have drunk the more, Master Dampit.

Damp. What's that?

Aud. You might an you would, Master Dampit.

Damp. I answer you, I cannot: hold your prating! you prate too much, and understand too little: are you answered? Give me a glass of beer.

Aud. May I ask you how you do, Master Dampit?

Damp. How do I? I'faith, naught.

Aud. I ne'er knew you do otherwise.

Damp. I eat not one pennorth of bread these two years. Give me a glass of fresh beer. I am not sick, nor I am not well.

Aud. Take this warm napkin about your neck, sir, whilst I help to make you unready.

Damp. How now, Audrey-prater, with your scurvy devises; what say you now?

Aud. What say I, Master Dampit? I say nothing, but that you are very weak.

Damp. Faith, thou hast more coney-catching devises than all London.

Aud. Why, Master Dampit, I never deceiv'd you in all my life.

Damp. Why was that? because I did never trust thee.

Aud. I care not what you say, Master Dampit.

Damp. Hold thy prating! I answer thee, thou art a beggar, a quean, and a bawd: are you answer'd?

Aud. Fie, Master Dampit! a gentleman, and have such words!

Damp. Why, thou base drudge of infortunity, thou kitchen-stuff-drab of beggary, roguery, and cockscombry, thou cavernsed quean of foolery, knavery, and bawdreaminy, I'll tell thee what, I will not give a louse for thy fortunes.

Aud. No, Master Dampit? and there's a gentleman comes a wooing to me, and he doubts nothing but that you will get me from him.

Damp. I? If I would either have thee or lie with thee for two thousand pound, would I might be damn'd! why, thou base impudent quean of foolery, flattery, and coxcombry, are you answered?

Aud. Come, will you rise and go to bed, sir?

Damp. Rise, and go to bed too, Audrey? How does Mistress Proserpine?

Aud. Foh!

Damp. She's as fine a philosopher of a stinkard's wife, as any within the liberties. Fah! fah! Audrey.

Aud. How now, Master Dampit?

Damp. Fie upon't! what a choice of stinks here is: what hast thou done, Audrey? fie upon't! here's a choice of stinks indeed:—give me a glass of fresh beer, and then I will to bed.

Aud. It waits for you above, sir.

Damp. Foh! I think they burn horns in Barnard's Inn. If ever I felt such an abominable stink, usury forsake me! [*Exit.*

Aud. They be the stinking nails of his trampling feet, and he talks of burning horns. [*Exit.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Scene—Coal Harbour. Enter HOARD *and* COURTEZAN, *as just married, with* GENTLEMEN.

1 *Gentlem.* Join hearts, join hands, in wedlock's bands,
Never to part till death cleave your heart.
(To Hoard.) You shall forsake all other women;
(To Widow.) You lords, knights, gentlemen, and yeomen,
What my tongue slips make you up with lips.

Hoard. (Kisses her.) Give you joy, Mrs. Hoard; let the kiss come about.

[*Knocking.*

Who knocks? Convey my little pig-eater out.

Lucre. (From within.) Hoard!

Hoard. Upon my life! my adversary, gentlemen.

Lucre. (From within.) Hoard, open the door, or we will force it ope!
Give us the widow!

Hoard. Gentlemen, keep 'em out.

Lamp. He comes upon his death that enters here.

Lucre. (From within.) My friends assist me.

Hoard. He has assistants, gentlemen.

Lamp. Tut! nor him, nor them, we in this action fear.

Lucre. (From within.) Shall I in peace speak one word with the widow?

Court. Husband, and gentlemen, hear me but a word!

Hoard. Freely, sweet wife.

Court. Let him in peaceably; you know we're sure from any act of his.

Hoard. Most true.

Court. * You may stand by and smile at his old weakness, let me alone to answer him.

Hoard. Content.

'Twill be good mirth, i'faith; how think you, gentlemen?

Lamp. Good gullery!

Hoard. Upon calm conditions let him in.

Lucre. *(From within.)* All spite and malice—

Lamp. Hear me, Master Lucre:
So you will vow a peaceful entrance
With those your friends, and only exercise
Calm conference with the widow, without fury,
The passage shall receive you.

Lucre. *(From within.)* I do vow it.

Lamp. Then enter and talk freely: here she stands.

Enter LUCRE, HOST, *and Friends.*

Lucre. Oh, Master Hoard, your spite has watch'd the hour;
You're excellent at vengeance, Master Hoard.

Hoard. Ha! ha! ha!

Lucre. I am the fool you laugh at: you are wise, sir, and know the seasons well: come hither, widow; why is it thus?

[*Lucre and Court. converse apart.*

* This speech is erroneously given to Lucre in the quartos.

Oh! you have done me infinite disgrace,
And your own credit no small injury!
Suffer mine enemy so despitefully
To bear you from my nephew? Oh! I had
Rather half my substance had been forfeit
And begg'd by some starv'd rascal.

Court. Why what would you wish me do, sir?
I must not overthrow my state for love;
We have too many precedents for that;
From thousands of our wealthy undone widows
One may derive some wit: I do confess
I lov'd your nephew, nay, I did affect him
Against the mind and liking of my friends;
Believ'd his promises; lay here in hope
Of flatter'd living, and the boast of lands;
Coming to touch his wealth and state, indeed,
It appears dross; I find him not the man;
Imperfect, mean, scarce furnish'd of his needs;
In words, fair lordships; in performance, bovels;
Can any woman love the thing that is not?

Lucre. Broke you for this?

Court. Was it not cause too much?
Send to enquire his state; most part of it
Lay two years mortgag'd in his uncle's hands.

Lucre. Why say it did, you might have known my mind; I could have soon restor'd it.

Court. Ay, had I but seen any such thing perform'd, why 'twould have tied my affection, and contain'd me in my first desires: do you think, i'faith, that I could twine such a dry oak as this, had promise in your nephew took effect?

Lucre. Why, and there's no time past; and rather than my adversary should thus thwart my hopes, I would——

Court. Tut! you've been ever full of golden speech:
If words were lands your nephew would be rich.

Lucre. Widow, believe it, I vow by my best bliss,
(Before these gentlemen), I will give in
The mortgage to my nephew instantly,
Before I sleep or eat.

1 *Gentlem. (Friend to Lucre.)* We'll pawn our credits, widow, what he speaks shall be perform'd in fulness.

Lucre. Nay, more, I will estate him
In farther blessings; he shall be my heir;
I have no son;
I'll bind myself to that condition.

Court. When I shall hear this done, I shall soon yield
To reasonable terms.

Lucre. In the mean season,
Will you protest before these gentlemen,
To keep yourself as you are now at this present?

Court. I do protest, before these gentlemen
I will be as clear then as I am now.

Lucre. I do believe you; here's your own honest servant,
I'll take him along with me.

Court. Ay, with all my heart.

Lucre. He shall see all perform'd, and bring you word.

Court. That's all I wait for.

Hoard. What, have you finish'd, Master Lucre? Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lucre. So laugh, Hoard, laugh at your poor enemy; do; the wind may turn, you may be laugh'd at too; yes, marry may you, sir. Ha! ha! ha! [*Exeunt Lucre, Host, and friends.*

Hoard. Ha! ha! ha! if every man that swells in malice
Could be revenged as happily as I,
He would choose hate, and forswear amity.
What did he say, wife, prithee?

Court. Faith, spoke to ease his mind.

Hoard. Oh! oh! oh!

Court. You know now little to any purpose.

Hoard. True, true, true!

Court. He would do mountains now.

Hoard. Ay, ay, ay, ay.

Lamp. You've struck him dead, Master Hoard.

Spich. Ay, and his nephew desperate.

Hoard. I know't, sir, I.
Never did man so crush his enemy. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LUCRE *with* GENTLEMEN, *and* HOST, *meeting* SAM FREEDOM.

Lucre. My son-in-law,
Sam Freedom, where's my nephew?

Sam. Oh, man, in lamentation, father.

Lucre. How!

Sam. He thumps his breast like a gallant dicer that has lost his doublet, and stands in's shirt to do penance.

Lucre. Alas! poor gentleman.

Sam. I warrant you may hear him sigh in a still evening to your house at Highgate.

Lucre. I prithee send him in.

Sam. Were it to do a greater matter, I will not stick with you, sir, in regard you married my mother.

Lucre. Sweet gentlemen, cheer him up; I

will but fetch the mortgage and return to you instantly. [*Exit.*

1 *Gentlem.* We'll do our best, sir. See where he comes,
Even joyless and regardless of all form.

Enter WITGOOD.

2 *Gentlem.* Why, how now, Master Witgood? Fie! you a firm scholar, and an understanding gentleman, and give your best parts to passion?

1 *Gentlem.* Come, fie, fie!

Wit. Oh! gentlemen——

1 *Gentlem.* Sorrow of me! what a sigh was there: nine such widows are not worth it.

Wit. To be borne from me by that letcher Hoard!

1 *Gentlem.* That vengeance is your uncle's; being done
More in despite to him than wrong to you;
But we bring comfort now.

Wit. I beseech you, gentlemen——

2 *Gentlem.* Cheer thyself, man, there's hope of her, i'faith.

Wit. Too gladsome to be true.

Enter LUCRE *with Papers in his Hand.*

Lucre. Nephew, what cheer? Alas! poor gentleman, how art thou chang'd? call thy fresh blood into thy cheeks again; she comes!

Wit Nothing afflicts me so much,
But that it is your adversary, uncle,
And merely plotted in despite of you.

Lucre. Ay, that's it mads me! spites me! I'll spend my wealth ere he shall carry her so, because I know 'tis only to spite me.—Ay, this is it:—Here, nephew, before these kind gentlemen, I deliver in your mortgage, (my promise to the widow:) see 'tis done; be wise, you're once more master of your own; the widow shall perceive now you are not altogether such a beggar as the world reputes you; you can make shift to bring her to three hundred a year, sir.

1 *Gentlem.* By'r lady, and that's no toy, sir.

Lucre. A word, nephew.

[*They converse apart.*

1 *Gentlem.* (*To Host.*) Now you may certify the widow.

Lucre. You must conceive it aright, nephew, now; to do you good I am content to do this.

Wit. I know it, sir.

Lucre. But your own conscience can tell I had it dearly enough of you.

Wit. Ay, that's most certain.

Lucre. Much money laid out, besides many a journey to fetch the rent; I hope you'll think on't, nephew.

Wit. I were worse than a beast else, i'faith.

Lucre. Although to blind the widow and the world, I out of policy do't, yet there's a conscience, nephew.

Wit. Heaven forbid else!

Lucre. When you are full possess'd,
'Tis nothing to return it.

Wit. Alas! a thing quickly done, uncle.

Lucre. Well said! you know I give it you but in trust.

Wit. Pray let me understand you rightly, uncle:
You give it me but in trust?

Lucre. No.

Wit. That is, you trust me with it?

Lucre. True, true.

Wit. (Aside.) But if ever I trust you with it again, would I might be* truss'd up for my labour.

Lucre. You can all witness, gentlemen; and you, sir, yeoman?

Host. My life for yours, sir, now; I know my Mistress's mind too well toward your nephew: let things be in preparation, and I'll train her hither in most excellent fashion. [*Exit.*

Lucre. A good old boy!—Wife! Jenny!

Enter WIFE.

Wife. What's the news, sir†?

Lucre. The wedding-day's at hand; prithee, sweet wife, express thy housewifery; thou'rt a fine cook, I know't; thy first husband married thee out of an alderman's kitchen: go to! he raised thee for raising of paste.—What! here's none but friends; most of our beginnings must be winked at.—Gentlemen, I invite you all to my nephew's wedding against Thursday morning.

1 *Gentlem.* With all our hearts, and we shall joy to see your enemy so mock'd.

Lucre. He laugh'd at me, gentlemen; ha! ha! ha! [*Exeunt.*

Wit. He has no conscience, faith, would laugh at them,

* The quarto of 1616, reads, "would I *were* truss'd up."

† In the quarto of 1616, this speech of the Wife's is omitted.

They laugh at one another;
Who then can be so cruel? troth, not I;
I rather pity now, than ought envy:
I do conceive such joy in mine own happiness,
I have no leisure yet to laugh at their follies.

Thou soul of my estate, I kiss thee,
I miss life's comfort when I miss thee;
Oh! never will we part again,
Until I leave the sight of men:
We'll ne'er trust conscience of our kin,
Since cozenage brings that title in. [*Exit.*

Enter Three CREDITORS.

1 *Cred.* I'll wait these seven hours but I'll see him caught.

2 *Cred.* Faith, so will I.

3 *Cred.* Hang him, prodigal, he's stripp'd of the widow.

1 *Cred.* O' my troth! she's the wiser; she has made the happier choice; and I wonder of what stuff those widows' hearts are made of, that will marry unfledg'd boys before comely thrumb-chin'd gentlemen *.

Enter a BOY.

Boy. News! news! news!

1 *Cred.* What, boy?

Boy. The rioter is caught.

1 *Cred.* So! so! so! so! it warms me at the heart; I love a' life to see dogs upon men. Oh, here he comes.

* The "*thrum*" is a coarse stuff, the end of a weaver's warp.

Enter SERGEANTS, *with* WITGOOD *in Custody.*

Wit. My last joy was so great, it took away the sense of all future afflictions. What a day is here o'ercast! how soon a black tempest rises!

1 *Cred.* Oh, we may speak with you now, sir? what's become of your rich widow? I think you may cast your cap at the widow *, may you not, sir?

2 *Cred.* He a rich widow? who, a prodigal, a daily rioter, and a nightly vomiter? he a widow of account? he a hole i' th' counter.

Wit. You do well, my masters, to tyrannise over misery; to afflict the afflicted; 'tis a custom you have here amongst you; I would wish you never leave it, and I hope you'll do as I bid you.

1 *Cred.* Come, come, sir, what say you extempory now to your bill of a hundred pound: a sweet debt for froating † your doublets.

2 *Cred.* Here's mine of forty.

3 *Cred.* Here's mine of fifty.

* This is a proverbial expression, and signifies you may despair of succeeding with the widow.

† "*Froating* your doublets"—may mean *fretting* or adorning with fret-work. But Witgood's vices, according to his own confession in a former scene, were those of sensuality, and not of foppery; and it is possible that this was the demand of the keeper of some brothel. Carlo Buffone, in the "Every Man Out of his Humour" of Ben Jonson, (Act IV. Scene III.) says, "Let a man sweat once a week in *a hot-house*, and be well *rubbed* and *frotted* with a good, plump, juicy wench." And Noose, the "ordinary gallant's Page," in the "What You Will" of Marston, (see vol. ii. p. 256) describing his situation, says, "I curl his periwig, paint his cheeks, perfume his breath; I am his *frotterer* or *rubber in a hot-house.*"

Wit. Pray, sirs, you'll give me breath?

1 *Cred.* No, sir, we'll keep you out of breath still; then we shall be sure you will not run away from us.

Wit. Will you but hear me speak?

2 *Cred.* You shall pardon us for that, sir; we know you have too fair a tongue of your own; you overcame us too lately, a shame take you! we are like to lose all that for want of witnesses; we dealt in policy then; always when we strive to be most politic we prove most coxcombs, *ne plus ultra.* I perceive by us we are not ordain'd to thrive by wisdom, and therefore we must be content to be tradesmen.

Wit. Give me but reasonable time, and I protest I'll make you ample satisfaction.

1 *Cred.* Do you talk of reasonable time to us?

Wit. 'Tis true, beasts know no reasonable time.

2 *Cred.* We must have either money or carcass.

Wit. Alas! what good will my carcass do you?

3 *Cred.* Oh, 'tis a secret delight we have amongst us: we that are used to keep birds in cages, have the heart to keep men in prison, I warrant you.

Wit. (Aside.) I perceive I must crave a little more aid from my wits; do but make shift for me this once, and I'll forswear ever to trouble you in the like fashion hereafter; I'll have better employment for you, an I live.—*(To the Cred.)* You'll give me leave, my masters, to make trial of my friends and raise all means I can.

1 *Cred.* That is our desires, sir.

Enter HOST.

Host. Master Witgood.

Wit. Oh, art thou come?

Host. May I speak one word with you in private, sir?

Wit. No, by my faith, canst thou not; I am in hell here, and the devils will not let me come to thee.

1 *Cred.* Do you call us devils? you shall find us puritans. Bear him away, let 'em talk as they go, we'll not stand to hear 'em: ah, sir, am I a devil? I shall think the better of myself as long as I live: a devil, i'faith! [*Exeunt.*

Enter HOARD.

Hoard. What a sweet blessing hast thou Master Hoard, above a multitude! wilt thou never be thankful? how dost thou think to be bless'd another time? or dost thou count this the full measure of thy happiness? by my troth, I think thou dost: not only a wife large in possessions, but spacious in content; she's rich, she's young, she's fair, she's wise; when I wake I think of her lands—that revives me; when I go to bed, I dream of her beauty—and that's enough for me: she's worth four hundred a year in her very smock, if a man knew how to use it: but the journey will be all, in troth, into the country—to ride to her lands in state and order following—my brother, and other worshipful gentlemen, (whose companies I ha' sent down for already), to ride along with us in their goodly decorum beards, their broad velvet cassocks, and chains of gold

twice or thrice double—against which time I'll entertain some ten men of mine own into liveries, all of occupations or qualities; I will not keep an idle man about me; the sight of which will so vex my adversary Lucre, for we'll pass by his door of purpose, make a little stand for [the] nonce*, and have our horses curvet before the window, certainly he will never endure it, but run up and hang himself presently.

Enter SERVANT.

How now, sirrah! what news? any that offer their service to me yet?

Serv. Yes, sir, there are some i' th' hall that wait for your worship's liking, and desire to be entertain'd.

Hoard. Are they of occupation?

Serv. They are men fit for your worship, sir.

Hoard. Say'st so? send 'em all in.—To see ten men ride after me in watchet† liveries, with orange-tawny caps, 'twill cut his comb, i'faith.

Enter several Persons.

How now! of what occupation are you, sir?

Tail. A tailor, an't please your worship.

Hoard. A tailor? oh, very good; you shall serve to make all the liveries. What are you, sir?

Barb. A barber, sir.

Hoard. A barber? very needful: you shall shave all the house, and, if need require, stand for a reaper i' th' summer time. You, sir?

Per. A perfumer.

Hoard. I smelt you before: perfumers of all

* See note, vol. ii. p. 259. † "*Watchet*," a pale blue.

men, had need carry themselves uprightly, for if they were once knaves they would be smelt out quickly. To you, sir?

Fal. A falconer, an't please your worship.

Hoard. Sa ho! sa ho! sa ho! And you, sir?

Hunts. A huntsman, sir.

Hoard. There, boy! there, boy! there, boy! I am not so old but I have pleasant days to come, I promise you, my masters; I take such a good liking to you, that I entertain you all*; I put you already into my countenance, and you shall be shortly in my livery; but especially you two, my jolly Falconer and my bouny Huntsman; we shall have most need of you at my wife's manor houses i' th' country; there's goodly parks and champion† grounds for you; we shall have all our sports within ourselves; all the gentlemen i' th' country shall be beholding to us and our pastimes.

Fal. And we'll make your worship admire, sir.

Hoard. Say'st thou so? do but make me admire, and thou shalt want for nothing. My Tailor.

Tail. Anon, sir.

Hoard. Go presently in hand with the liveries.

Tail. I will, sir.

Hoard. My Barber.

Barb. Here, sir.

Hoard. Make 'em all trim fellows; louse 'em well, especially my Huntsman, and cut all their beards of the Polonian fashion. My Perfumer.

* "*I take such a good liking to you, that I entertain you all;*" this line is omitted by accident in the quarto of 1616.

† Champaign.

Per. Under your nose, sir.

Hoard. Cast a better savour upon the knaves, to take away the scent of my Tailor's feet, and my Barber's lotion-water.

Per. It shall be carefully perform'd, sir.

Hoard. But you, my Falconer and Huntsman, the welcom'st men alive, i'faith.

Hunts. And we'll show you that, sir, shall deserve your worship's favour.

Hoard. I prithee show me that: go, you knaves all, and wash your lungs i' th' buttery; go!

[*Exeunt Servants.*

By the mass, and well remembered! I'll ask my wife that question. Wife! Mistress Jane Hoard!

Enter COURTEZAN, *altered in Apparel.*

Court. Sir, would you with me?

Hoard. I would but know, sweet wife, which might stand best to thy liking, to have the wedding dinner kept here or i' th' country?

Court. Hum! Faith, sir, 'twould like me better here; here you were married, here let all rites be ended.

Hoard. Could a marquess* give a better answer! Hoard, bear thy head aloft, thou'st a wife will advance it.

* *Marquess* is used here for marchioness, as by Shakspeare in "Henry VIII."

"——— the old Dutchess of Norfolk,
And Lady *Marquis* Dorset."

I am inclined to think, that Shakspeare wrote it *marquess*, and that the error is the printer's; the same having been made in the second quarto of this play.

Enter HOST *with a Letter.*

What haste comes here now t'ye? a letter! some dreg of my adversary's malice: come hither; what's the news?

Host. A thing that concerns my mistress, sir.

Hoard. Why then it concerns me, knave.

Host. Ay, and you, knave, too; (cry your worship mercy;) you are both like to come into trouble, I promise you, sir; a pre-contract.

Hoard. How! a pre-contract say'st thou?

Host. I fear they have too much proof on't, sir; old Lucre, he runs mad up and down, and will to law as fast as he can: young Witgood laid hold on by his creditors, he exclaims upon you o' t'other side, says you have wrought his undoing by the injurious detaining of his contract.

Hoard. Body o' me!

Host. He will have utmost satisfaction;
The law shall give him recompense, he says.

[*Hoard and Host converse apart.*

Court. (Aside.) Alas! his creditors so merciless; my state being yet uncertain, I deem it not unconscionable to further him.

Host. True, sir.

Hoard. Wife, what says the letter? let me construe it.

Court. Curs'd be my rash and unadvised words!

[*Tears the letter and stamps on it.*

I'll set my foot upon my tongue,
And tread my inconsiderate grant to dust.

Hoard. Wife——

[*Hoard and Wife converse apart.*

Host. (Aside.) A pretty shift, i'faith! I com-

mend a woman when she can make away a letter from her husband handsomely, and this was cleanly done, by my troth.

Court. I did, sir;
Some foolish words I must confess did pass,
Which now litigiously he fastens on me.

Hoard. Of what force? let me examine 'em.

Court. Too strong, I fear; would I were well freed of 'em.

Hoard. Shall I compound?

Court. No, sir, I'd have it done some nobler way
Of your side; I'd have you come off with honour;
Let baseness keep with them: why, have you not
The means, sir? the occasion's offer'd you.

Hoard. Where? how, dear wife?

Court. He is now caught by his creditors; the slave's needy; his debts petty; he'll rather bind himself to all inconveniences than rot in prison; by this only means you may get a release from him; 'tis not yet come to his uncle's hearing; send speedily for the creditors; by this time he's desperate; he'll set his hand to any thing; take order for his debts, or discharge 'em quite: a pax on him! let's be rid of a rascal.

Hoard. Excellent! thou dost astonish me. *(To Host.)* Go! run! make haste! bring both the creditors and Witgood hither.

Host. (Aside.) This will be some revenge yet.

Hoard. In the mean space I'll have a release drawn. Within there!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir.

Hoard. Sirrah, come take directions; go to my Scrivener. [*They converse apart.*

Court. (Aside.) I'm yet like those whose
riches lie in dreams,
If I be wak'd they're false; such is my fate;
Who ventur'd deeper than the desperate state.
Though I have sin'd, yet could I become new,
For where I once vow I am ever true.

Hoard. Away! dispatch! on my displeasure quickly. *(Exit Servant.)* Happy occasion! pray heaven he be in the right vein now to set his hand to't that nothing alter him: grant that all his follies may meet in him at once, to besot him enough! I pray for him, i'faith, and here he comes.

Enter WITGOOD *and* CREDITORS.

Wit. What would you with me now, my uncle's spiteful adversary?

Hoard. Nay, I am friends.

Wit. Ay, when your mischief's spent.

Hoard. I heard you were arrested.

Wit. Well, what then? you will pay none of my debts, I'm sure.

Hoard. A wise man cannot tell;
There may be those conditions agreed upon
May move me to do much.

Wit. Ay, when? 'Tis thou, perjur'd woman!
(oh, no name
Is vile enough to match thy treachery!)
Thou art the cause of my confusion.

Court. Out! you penurious slave.

Hoard. Nay, wife, you are too froward;
Let him alone; give losers leave to talk.

Wit. Shall I remember thee of another promise far stronger than the first?

Court. I'd fain know that.

Wit. 'Twould call shame to thy cheeks.

Court. Shame!

Wit. Hark in your ear.—*(They talk apart.)* Will he come off, think'st thou, and pay my debts roundly?

Court. Doubt nothing; there's a release drawing and all, to which you must set your hand.

Wit. Excellent!

Court. But methinks, i'faith, you might have made some shift to discharge this yourself, having in the mortgage, and never have burthen'd my conscience with it.

Wit. O' my troth, I could not, for my creditors' cruelties extend to the present.

Court. No more!—Why, do your worst for that, I defy you.

Wit. You're impudent; I'll call up the witnesses.

Court. Call up thy wits! for thou hast been devoted to follies a long time.

Hoard. Wife, you're too bitter. Master Witgood, and you my masters, you shall hear a mild speech come from me now, and this it is: 't has been my fortune, gentlemen, to have an extraordinary blessing pour'd upon me o' late, and here she stands; I have wedded her, and bedded her, and yet she is little the worse; some foolish words she hath pass'd to you in the country, and some peevish debts you owe here in the city; set the hare's head to the goose giblet*, release you her of her words, and I'll release you of her debts, sir.

* A proverbial expression, to be found in Ray's Collection.

Wit. Would you so? I thank you for that, sir; I cannot blame you, i'faith.

Hoard. Why, are not debts better than words, sir?

Wit. Are not words promises, and are not promises debts, sir?

Hoard. *(Aside.)* He plays at back-racket with me.

1 *Cred.* Come hither, Master Witgood, come hither, be rul'd by fools once.

[*Wit. and Cred. converse apart.*

2 *Cred.* We are citizens, and know what belong to't.

1 *Cred.* Take hold of his offer; pax on her! let her go; if your debts were once discharg'd, I would help you to a widow myself worth ten of her.

3 *Cred.* Mass! partner, and now you remember me on't, there's Master Mulligrub's sister newly fallen a widow.

1 *Cred.* Cuds me! as pat as can be; there's a widow left for you; ten thousand in money, beside plate, jewels, *et cetera;* I warrant it a match; we can do all in all with her; prithee dispatch, we'll carry thee to her presently.

Wit. My uncle will ne'er endure me when he shall hear I set my hand to a release.

2 *Cred.* Hark, I'll tell thee a trick for that; I have spent five hundred pounds in suits in my time, I *should* be wise; thou'rt now a prisoner; make a release, take't of my word, whatsoever a man makes as long as he is in durance, 'tis nothing in law, not thus much. [*Snaps his fingers.*

Wit. Say you so, sir?

3 *Cred.* I have paid for't, I know't.

Wit. Proceed then; I consent.

3 *Cred.* Why, well said.

Hoard. How now, my masters, what have you done with him?

1 *Cred.* With much ado, sir, we have got him to consent.

Hoard. Ah—a—a, and what come his debts to now?

1 *Cred.* Some eight score, odd pounds, sir.

Hoard. Naw, naw, naw, naw, naw! tell me the second time; give me a lighter sum; they are but desperate debts you know; ne'er call'd in but upon such an accident; a poor, needy knave, he would starve and rot in prison: come, come, you shall have ten shillings in the pound, and the sum down roundly.

1 *Cred.* You must make it a mark, sir.

Hoard. Go to then! tell your money; in the meantime you shall find little less there. *(Giving them money.)* Come, Master Witgood, you are so unwilling to do yourself good now.

Enter SCRIVENER.

Welcome, honest Scrivener; now you shall hear the release read.

Scriv. Be it known to all men, by these presents, that I, Theodorus Witgood, gentleman, sole nephew to Pecunious Lucre, having unjustly made title and claim to one Jane Medler, late widow of Anthony Medler, and now wife to Walkadine Hoard, in consideration of a competent sum of money to discharge my debts, do for ever hereafter disclaim any title, right, estate, or interest in, or to, the said widow, late in the occupation of the said Anthony Medler, and now in the occupation

of Walkadine Hoard; as also neither to lay claim by virtue of any former contract, grant, promise, or demise, to any of her manor, manor-houses, parks, groves, meadow grounds, arable lands, barns, stacks, stables, dove-holes, and coney-burrows; together with all her cattle, money, plate, jewels, borders, chains, bracelets, furnitures, hangings, moveables or immoveables; in witness whereof, I the said Theodorus Witgood have interchangeably set to my hand and seal before these presents, the day and date above written.

Wit. What a precious fortune hast thou slip'd here like a beast as thou art!

Hoard. Come, unwilling heart, come.

Wit. Well, Master Hoard, give me the pen; I see
'Tis vain to quarrel with our destiny.

Hoard. Oh, as vain a thing as can be; you cannot commit a greater absurdity, sir. So, so; give me that hand now; before all these presents, I am friends for ever with thee.

Wit. Troth, and it were pity of my heart now, if I should bear you any grudge, i'faith.

Hoard. Content; I'll send for thy uncle against the wedding dinner; we will be friends once again.

Wit. I hope to bring it to pass myself, sir.

Hoard. (To the Cred.) How now! Is't right, my masters?

1 *Cred.* 'Tis something wanting, sir, yet it shall be sufficient.

Hoard. Why, well said, a good conscience makes a fine shew now-a-days. Come, my masters, you shall all taste of my wine ere you depart.

All. We follow you, sir.

Wit. I'll try these fellows now.—*(To 1st Cred.)* A word, sir; what, will you carry me to that widow now?

1 *Cred.* Why, do you think we were in earnest, i'faith? carry you to a rich widow? we should get much credit by that; a noted rioter! a contemptible prodigal! 'twas a trick we have amongst us to get in our money; fare you well, sir. [*Exeunt.*

Wit. Farewell, and be hang'd, you short pig-hair'd, ram-headed rascals; he that believes in you shall ne'er be sav'd, I warrant him. By this new league I shall have some access * unto my love.

NIECE *appears above.*

Niece. Master Witgood.

Wit. My life.

Niece. Meet me presently—that note directs you;—*(throws him a letter.)* I would not be suspected—our happiness attends us—farewell.

Wit. A word's enough. [*Exeunt.*

Scene—DAMPIT'S *Room.* DAMPIT, *the Usurer, in Bed,* AUDREY *spinning by him.*

SONG.

Let the usurer cram him, (in interest that excel),
There's pits enow to damn him, before he comes to hell;
In Holborn some, in Fleet Street some,
Where e'er he come there's some, there's some.

* The quarto of 1616 reads, "some *above* access;" and the Niece speaks without a notice of her having entered: whereas, in the first quarto, there is a stage direction, "She is *above*;" and I suppose the word caught the printer's eye, and was erroneously introduced into the text.

Damp. Trahe, trahito, draw the curtain; give me a sip of sack more.

Enter LAMPREY *and* SPICHCOCK.

Lamp. (Aside to Spich.) Look you, did not I tell you he lay like the devil in chains, when he was bound for a thousand year*.

Spich. But I think the devil had no steel bedstafs; he goes beyond him for that†.

Lamp. Nay, do but mark the conceit of his drinking; one must wipe his mouth for him with a muckinger; do you see, sir?

Spich. Is this the sick trampler? why he is only bed-rid with drinking.

Lamp. True, sir. He spies us.

Damp. What, Sir Tristram? you come and see a weak man here, a very weak man.

Lamp. If you be weak in body; you should be strong in prayer, sir.

Damp. Oh, I have prayed too much, poor man.

Lamp. (Aside to Spich.) There's a taste of his soul for you.

Spich. Fah! loathsome!

Lamp. I come to borrow a hundred pound of you, sir.

Damp. Alas! you come at an ill time; I cannot spare it, i'faith; I ha' but two thousand i' th' house.

Aud. Ha! ha! ha!

* Our poet alludes here to a passage in the Revelation of St. John, chap. xx. ver. 2.

† It is unnecessary to observe there was something particular about Dampit's bed; the reader, however, will collect all the information I could give him from this scene.

Damp. Out! you gernative quean, the mullipood of villany, the spinner of concupiscency.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *and others.*

Laun. Ye gentlemen, are you here before us? how is he now?

Damp. Faith, the same man still: the tavern bitch has bit him i' th' head *.

Laun. We shall have the better sport with him. Peace!—And how cheers Master Dampit now?

Damp. Oh, my bosom Sir Launcelot, how cheer I? Thy presence is restorative.

Laun. But I hear a great complaint of you, Master Dampit, among gallants.

Damp. I am glad of that, i'faith: prithee, what?

Laun. They say you are wax'd proud o' late, and if a friend visit you in the afternoon, you'll scarce know him.

Damp. Fie, fie! proud? I cannot remember any such thing: sure I was drunk then.

Laun. Think you so, sir?

Damp. There 'twas, i'faith; nothing but the pride of the sack; and so certify 'em. Fetch sack, sirrah!

Boy. A vengeance sack you once!

Aud. Why, Master Dampit, if you hold on as you begin, and lie a little longer, you need not take care how to dispose your wealth; you'll make the Vintner your heir.

Damp. Out! you babliaminy, you unfeather'd cremitoried quean, you cullisance of scabiosity!

* One of the many proverbs expressive of inebriety.

Aud. Good words, Master Dampit, to speak before a maid and a virgin.

Damp. Hang thy virginity upon the pole of carnality!

Aud. Sweet terms! my mistress shall know 'em.

Lamp. (Aside.) Note but the misery of this usuring slave; here he lies, like a noisome dunghill, full of the poison of his drunken blasphemies; and they to whom he bequeaths all, grudge him the very meat that feeds him, the very pillow that eases him: here may a usurer behold his end: what profits it to be a slave in this world, and a devil i' th' next!

Damp. Sir Launcelot! let me buss thee, Sir Launcelot; thou art the only friend that I honour and respect.

Laun. I thank you for that, Master Dampit.

Damp. Farewell, my bosom Sir Launcelot.

Laun. (Aside to the Gentlemen.) Gentlemen, an you love me, let me step behind you, and one of you fall a talking of me to him.

Lamp. Content.—Master Dampit.

Damp. So, sir.

Lamp. Here came Sir Launcelot to see you e'en now.

Damp. Hang him! rascal.

Lamp. Who? Sir Launcelot?

Damp. Pythagorical rascal.

Lamp. Pythagorical?

Damp. Ay, he changes his cloak when he meets a sergeant*.

* I scarcely need notice that Dampit's explanation of the name is in allusion to the doctrine of *Metempsychosis* first taught by that philosopher.

Laun. (Aside.) What a rogue's this!

Lamp. I wonder you can rail at him, sir; he comes in love to see you.

Damp. A louse for his love! his father was a comb-maker; I have no need of his crawling love: he comes to have longer day*, the superlative rascal!

Laun. (Aside.) S'foot! I can no longer endure the rogue.—Master Dampit, I come to take my leave once again, sir.

Damp. Who? my dear and kind Sir Launcelot, the only gentleman of England? let me hug thee; farewell, and a thousand.

Lamp. (Aside.) Composed of wrongs and slavish flattery!

Laun. (Aside to Gentlemen.) Nay, gentlemen, he shall show you more tricks yet; I'll give you another taste of him.

Lamp. Is't possible?

Laun. His memory is upon departing.

Damp. Another cup of sack!

Laun. (Aside to the others.) Mass! then 'twill be quite gone. Before he drink that, tell him there's a country client come up, and here attends for his learned advice.

Lamp. Enough.

Damp. One cup more, and then let the bell toll. I hope I shall be weak enough by that time.

Lamp. Master Dampit.

Damp. Is the sack spouting?

Lamp. 'Tis coming forward, sir. Here's a

* Dampit means to insinuate, I conceive, that he had borrowed money of him, and only called to postpone the payment.

country man, a client of yours, waits for your deep and profound advice, sir.

Damp. A coxcombry, where is he? let him approach: set me up a peg higher.

Lamp. (To Laun.) You must draw near, sir.

Damp. Now, good man fooliaminy, what say you to me now?

Laun. Please your good worship, I am a poor man, sir——

Damp. What make you in my chamber, then?

Laun. I would entreat your worship's device * in a just and honest cause, sir.

Damp. I meddle with no such matters; I refer 'em to Master No-man's office.

Laun. I had but one house left me in all the world, sir, which was my father's, my grandfather's, my great grandfather's, and now a villain has unjustly wrung me out, and took possession on't.

Damp. Has he such feats? Thy best course is to bring thy *ejectione firme*, and in seven years thou mayst shove him out by the law.

Laun. Alas! an't please your worship, I have small friends and less money.

Damp. Hoyday! this geer will fadge well †: hast thou no money? why, then, my advice is, thou must set fire o' th' house, and so get him out.

Lamp. That will break strife, indeed.

* *Device* for *advice;* I suppose it intentional.

† "This *geer* will *fadge* well." *Geer* is a word of frequent occurrence in the authors of the time, signifying *things* or *matters* in general. *Fadge* has been explained in vol. i. p. 205.

Laun. I thank your worship for your hot counsel, sir. *(Aside to the others.)* Alt'ring but my voice a little, you see he knew me not; you may observe by this, that a drunkard's memory holds longer in the voice, than in the person. But, gentlemen, shall I show you a sight? Behold the little dive-dapper of damnation, Gulfe the usurer, for his time worse than t'other.

Enter HOARD *with* GULFE.

Lamp. What's he comes with him?

Laun. Why, Hoard, that married lately the widow Medler.

Lamp. Oh, I cry you mercy, sir.

Hoard. Now, gentlemen visitants, how does Master Dampit?

Laun. Faith, here he lies, e'en drawing in, sir, good Canary as fast as he can, sir; a very weak creature truly, he is almost past memory.

Hoard. Fie! Master Dampit: you lie lazing a-bed here, and I come to invite you to my wedding dinner: up! up! up!

Damp. Who's this? Master Hoard? who hast thou married in the name of foolery?

Hoard. A rich widow.

Damp. A Dutch widow?

Hoard. A rich widow; one widow Medler.

Damp. Medler? she keeps open house.

Hoard. She did, I can tell you, in her t'other husband's days; open house for all comers; horse and man was welcome, and room enough for 'em all.

Damp. There's too much for thee then, thou may'st let out some to thy neighbours.

Gulfe. What! hung alive in chains? O spectacle! bed-staffs of steel? *O monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum,* Oh, Dampit, Dampit, here's a just judgment shown upon usury, extortion, and trampling villany.

Laun. This [is] excellent! thief rails upon the thief.

Gulfe. Is this the end of cut-throat usury, brothel, and blasphemy? now mayst thou see what race a usurer runs.

Damp. Why, thou rogue of universality, do not I know thee? thy sound is like the cuckoo, the Welch Embassador*, thou cowardly slave, that offers to fight with a sick man when his weapon's down: rail upon me in my naked bed? why, thou great Lucifer's little vicar! I am not so weak but I know a knave at first sight: thou inconscionable rascal! thou that goest upon Middlesex juries, and will make haste to give up thy verdict because thou wilt not lose thy dinner! are you answered?

Gulfe. An't were not for shame——

[*Draws his dagger.*

Damp. Thou wouldst be hang'd then.

Lamp. Nay, you must exercise patience, Master Gulfe, always in a sick man's chamber.

Laun. He'll quarrel with none, I warrant you, but those that are bed-rid.

Damp. Let him come, gentlemen, I am arm'd: reach my close-stool hither.

Laun. Here will be a sweet fray anon; I'll leave you, gentlemen.

* Why the *cuckoo* is called the *Welch Embassador*, I know not.

Lamp. Nay, we'll along with you, Master Gulfe.

Gulfe. Hang him! usuring rascal.

Laun. Push, set your strength to his, your wit to his.

Aud. Pray, gentlemen, depart; his hour's come upon him, *(To Damp.)* Sleep in my bosom, sleep.

Laun. Nay, we have enough of him, i'faith; keep him for the house.——Now make your best,

For thrice his wealth, I would not have his breast.

Gulfe. A little thing would make me beat him now he's asleep.

Laun. Mass, then 'twill be a pitiful day when he wakes;

I would be lothe to see that day come.

Gulfe. You overrule me, gentlemen, i'faith.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V. Scene 1.

Enter Lucre *and* Witgood.

Wit. Nay, uncle, let me prevail with you so much; i'faith go, now he has invited you.

Lucre. I shall have great joy there when he has borne away the widow.

Wit. Why, la, I thought where I should find you presently: uncle, o' my troth, 'tis nothing so.

Lucre. What's nothing so, sir? Is not he married to the widow?

Wit. No, by my troth, is he not, uncle.

Lucre. How?

Wit. Will you have the truth on't? He is married to a whore, i'faith.

Lucre. I should laugh at that.

Wit. Uncle, let me perish in your favour if you find it not so; and that 'tis I that have married the honest woman.

Lucre. Ha! I'd walk ten mile o' foot to see that, i'faith.

Wit. And see't you shall, or I'll ne'er see you again.

Lucre. A quean, i'faith? ha! ha! ha! [*Exeunt.*

Enter Hoard *tasting Wine, the* Host *following in a Livery Cloak.*

Hoard. Pup, pup, pup, pup, I like not this wine; is there never a better tierce in the house?

Host. Yes, sir, there are as good tierces in the house as any are in England.

Hoard. Desire your mistress, you knave, to taste 'em all over; she has better * skill.

* The quarto of 1616, reads, "*best* skill."

Host. *(Aside.)* Has she so! the better for her and the worse for you. [*Exit.*

Hoard. Arthur! *(Enter* ARTHUR.*)* Is the cupboard of plate set out*?

Arth. All's in order, sir. [*Exit.*

Hoard. I am in love with my liveries every time I think on 'em; they make a gallant show, by my troth. Niece!

Enter NIECE.

Niece. Do you call, sir?

Hoard. Prithee show a little diligence, and overlook the knaves a little; they'll filch and steal to-day, and send whole pasties home to their wives: an thou be'st a good niece do not see me purloin'd.

Niece. Fear it not, sir; I have cause: though the feast be prepared for you, yet it serves fit for my wedding dinner too.

Enter LAMPREY *and* SPICHCOCK.

Hoard. Master Lamprey and Master Spichcock, two the most welcome gentlemen alive; your fathers and mine were all free o' th' fishmongers.

Lamp. They were indeed, sir. You see bold guests, sir; soon entreated.

Hoard. And that's best, sir. *(Enter* SERVANT.*)* How now, sirrah?

Serv. There's a coach come to the door, sir. [*Exit.*

Hoard. My Lady Foxtone, o' my life! Mistress Jane Hoard! Wife! *(Enter* COURTEZAN.*)*

* Hoard means what was called a *coart-cupboard.* See note, vol. iii. p. 394.

Mass! 'tis her ladyship indeed. (*Enter* LADY FOXTONE.) Madam, you are welcome to an unfurnish'd house, dearth of cheer, scarcity of attendance.

L. Fox. You are pleas'd to make the worst, sir.

Hoard. Wife——

L. Fox. Is this your wife?

Hoard. Yes, madam.—Salute my Lady Foxtone.

Court. Please you, madam, awhile to taste the air in the garden?

L. Fox. 'Twill please us well.

[*Exeunt L. Fox. and Court.*

Hoard. Who would not wed? the most delicious life!
No joys are like the pleasures * of a wife.

Lamp. So we batchelors think, that are not troubled with them.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Your worship's brother, with another ancient gentleman, are newly alighted, sir. [*Exit.*

Hoard. Master Onesiphorus Hoard? why now our company begins to come in. (*Enter* ONESIPHORUS HOARD, LIMBER, *and* KICKS.) My dear and kind brother welcome, i'faith.

Ones. You see we are men at an hour, brother.

Hoard. Ay, I'll say that for you, brother; you keep as good an hour to come to a feast as any gentleman in the shire. What, old Master Limber and Master Kicks! do we meet, i'faith, jolly, gentlemen?

Limb. We hope you lack guests, sir?

Hoard. Oh, welcome, welcome! we lack still such guests as your worships.

* The edition of 1608 reads, "*comforts.*"

Ones. Ah, sirrah, brother, have you catch'd up widow Medler?

Hoard. From 'em all, brother; and I may tell you I had mighty enemies, those that stuck sore; old Lucre is a sore fox, I can tell you, brother.

Ones. Where is she? I'll go seek her out: I long to have a smack at her lips.

Hoard. And most wishfully, brother, see where she comes. (*Enter* COURTEZAN.) Give her a smack now we may hear it all the house over.

[*Both turn back.*

Court. (Aside.) Oh, heaven! I am betrayed: I know that face.

Hoard. Ha! ha! ha! why, how now? are you both asham'd? Come, gentlemen, we'll look another way.

Ones. Nay, brother, hark you: come, you're dispos'd to be merry.

Hoard. Why do we meet else man?

Ones. That's another matter: I was ne'er so 'fraid in my life but that you had been in earnest.

Hoard. How mean you, brother?

Ones. You said she was your wife.

Hoard. Did I so? and, by my troth, and so she is.

Ones. By your troth, brother?

Hoard. What reason have I to dissemble with my friends, brother? if marriage can make her mine, she is mine. Why?

[*Onesiphorus is about to retire.*

Ones. Troth, I am not well of a sudden: I must crave pardon, brother, I came to see you, but I cannot stay dinner, i'faith.

Hoard. I hope you will not serve me so, brother?

Limb. By your leave, Master Hoard.

Hoard. What now? what now? pray, gentlemen: you were wont to show yourselves wise men.

Limb. But you have shown your folly too much here.

Hoard. How?

Kicks. Fie, fie! a man of your repute and name. You'll feast your friends, but cloy 'em first with shame.

Hoard. This grows too deep, pray let us reach the sense.

Limb. In your old age dote on a courtezan.

Hoard. Ha!

Kicks. Marry a strumpet.

Hoard. Gentlemen!

Ones. And Witgood's quean.

Hoard. Oh! nor lands nor living?

Ones. Living?

Hoard. *(To Court.)* Speak.

Court. Alas, you know at first, sir,
I told you I had nothing.

Hoard. Out! out! I am cheated; infinitely cozened!

Limb. Nay, Master Hoard.

Enter WITGOOD *and* LUCRE.

Hoard. A *Dutch* widow! a *Dutch* widow! a *Dutch* widow!

Lucre. Why, nephew, shall I trace thee still a liar? wilt make me mad? Is not yon thing the widow?

Wit. Why, la, you are so hard o' belief, uncle; by my troth, she's a whore.

Lucre. Then thou'rt a knave.

Wit. *Negatur argumentum*, uncle.

Lucre. *Probo tibi*, nephew: He that knows a

woman to be a quean must needs be a knave; thou sayst thou *knowest* her to be one; *ergo*, if she be a quean, thou'rt a knave.

Wit. *Negatur, sequela majoris*, uncle; he that knows a woman to be a quean must needs be a knave? I deny that.

Hoard. Lucre and Witgood, you are both villains; get you out of my house!

Lucre. Why, didst not invite me to thy wedding dinner?

Wit. And are not you and I sworn perpetual friends before witness, sir, and were both drunk upon't.

Hoard. Daintily abus'd! you've put a junt* upon me.

Lucre. Ha! ha! ha!

Hoard. A common strumpet.

Wit. Nay, now you wrong her, sir; if I were she I'd have the law on you for that; I durst depose for her she ne'er had common use, nor common thought.

Court. Despise me, publish me, I am your wife;
What shame can I have now, but you'll have part,
If in disgrace you share? I sought not you;
You pursued me; nay, forc'd me;
Had I friends would follow it,
Less than your action has been prov'd a rape.

Ones. Brother!

Court. Nor did I ever boast of lands unto you,
Money, or goods; I took a plainer course,
And told you true I'd nothing:
If error were committed, 'twas by you;
Thank your own folly: nor has my sin been
So odious, but worse has been forgiven;

* The sense in which this word is used is sufficiently obvious.

Nor am I so deform'd, but I may challenge
The utmost power of any old man's love:
She that tastes not sin before, twenty to one but she'll taste it after: most of you old men are content to marry young virgins, and take that which follows; where marrying one of us, you both save a sinner, and are quit from a cuckold for ever:
And more, in brief, let this your best thoughts win,
She that knows sin, knows best how to hate sin.

Hoard. Curs'd be all malice! black are the fruits of spite,
And poison first their owners. Oh! my friends
I must embrace shame, to be rid of shame;
Conceal'd disgrace prevents a public name.
Ah, Witgood! ah, Theodorus!

Wit. Alas! sir, I was prick'd in conscience to see her well bestow'd, and where could I bestow her better than upon your pitiful worship? Excepting but myself, I dare swear she's a virgin; and now, by marrying your niece, I have banish'd myself for ever from her: she's mine aunt now, by my faith, and there's no medling with mine aunt you know; a sin against mine uncle.

Court. Lo, gentlemen, before you all, [*Kneels.*
In true reclaimed form I fall:
Henceforth for ever I defy
The glances of a sinful eye,
Waving of fans, which some suppose
Tricks of fancy, treading of toes,
Wringing of fingers, biting the lip,
The wanton gait, th' alluring trip,
All secret friends and private meetings,
Close borne letters, and bawds' greetings,
Feigning excuse to womens' labours
When we are sent for to th' next neighbours,

Taking false physic, and ne'er start
To be let blood, though sin * be at heart;
Removing chambers, shifting beds,
To welcome friends in husbands' steads,
Them to enjoy, and you to marry,
They first serv'd while you must tarry;
They to spend, and you to gather;
They to get, and you to father;
These, and thousand, thousand more,
Now reclaim'd I now abhor.

Lucre. (To Wit.) Ay, here's a lesson, rioter, for you.

Wit. I must confess my follies, I'll down too;
[*Kneels.*

And here for ever I disclaim
The cause of youth's undooing, game;
Chiefly dice, those true outlanders,
That shake out beggars, thieves, and panders;
Soul-wasting surfeits, sinful riots,
Queane's evils, doctor's diets,
'Pothecary's drugs, surgeon's glisters,
Stabbing of arms for a common mistress,
Reband favours, ribald speeches,
Dear perfum'd jackets, pennyless breeches,
Dutch flapdragons, healths in urine †,
Drabs that keep a man too sure in,

* Both editions agree in reading, "*sign* be at heart." While this work was passing through the press, I accidentally procured the first edition, and the reader will see that I have availed myself of it as far as lay in my power.

† "A flapdragon," says Stevens, in a note on "Love's Labours Lost," is a small inflammable substance, which topers swallow in a glass of wine." *Dutch*, however justly I do not presume to say, was in our poet's time generally coupled with some vice. A *Dutch widow* has been wrung in the reader's ears throughout this play in a very disgraceful sense: "*Dutch lust*" is used in the "Revenger's Tragedy" for superlative lust; and an hundred other instances might easily be adduced. Dutchmen and drink-

I do defy you all;
Lend me each honest hand, for here I rise
A reclaim'd man, loathing the general vice.

Hoard. So! so! all friends, the wedding dinner cools;
Who seems most crafty prove ofttimes most fools*.

ing, however, is an association we have not yet forgotten; and to them, perhaps, our ancestors might have been indebted for the flapdragon. This is certainly not the only instance in which their name is connected with them, as the following quotation, made by Stevens from the "Christian turn'd Turk," will serve to show;—"With as much facility as *Dutchmen* swallow *flapdragons.*" '*Stabbing of arms,*' and '*healths in urine*', were ceremonies observed by the riotous gallants of our poet's age in honour of their mistresses. So Tisefew in the "Dutch Courtezan," (Act the IVth) says to his mistress, "If I have not as religiously vow'd my heart to you, been drunk to your health, *swallow'd flapdragons,* eat glasses, *drunk urine, stabb'd arms,* and done all offices of protested gallantry for your sake." The reader may see further examples of these ridiculous customs in a note, vol. iv. p. 44.

* In the early part of this play the editor slightly suggested, to excite the attention of the reader, that he conceived the present drama might have afforded some hints to Massinger for his admirable play of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." In saying this he would not be understood to mean that there is any palpable imitation, or that the present drama, however creditable to its author, is in point of effect to be compared to that of Massinger: the character of Over-reach is not only very different, but beyond comparison superior not only to that of Lucre, but to any which Middleton ever drew. The manner, however, in which Witgood and Welborn appear to have been treated by Lucre and Over-reach, before the opening of each play—the projects of the two latter to turn the supposed partiality of the widows for the two prodigals to their own advantage, and supplying them with money on that account, seem to form a resemblance which is not entirely accidental. It seems certain at least, that the title of "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" would have been as apposite to the present play as that which Middleton has chosen.

FINIS.

A

NEW WONDER,

A

WOMAN NEVER VEXT:

A

COMEDY.

BY

WILLIAM ROWLEY.

5 G

WILLIAM ROWLEY.

This writer is ranked by the editors of the Biograph. Dram. in the third class of dramatic writers, and Mr. Gifford justly observes it is impossible to place him higher. Of the time or place of his birth or decease we are altogether ignorant: of his life it is only known that he was a player. That he lived on terms of intimacy with the dramatic writers of his time is sufficiently evident from his having written in conjunction with many of them; and, if we may believe the title-page, in one he received assistance from Shakspeare himself. He was a comedian, and one of the Prince's company of players; and Mr. Oldys observes, in his MS. notes on Langbaine, on the authority of the office books of Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chambers in those years, that, "One William Rowley was head of the Prince's company of comedians from 1613 to 1616:" this, there can be little doubt, was our author; and this is all that is for certain known of him. In announcing to the public, that in the course of this publication selections would appear (amongst others) from the works of Rowley, I contracted an obligation which I did not conceive I had fulfilled in the publication of the "Spanish Gipsy" and the "Changeling," written by this author in conjunction with Middleton; I decided, therefore, on the printing the present drama. The tragedy of "All's Lost by Lust" (as it is better known) would perhaps have been selected in preference, but for the resemblance it bears, in *the general outline*, to the "Women beware Women" of Middleton, and the "Appius and Virginia" of Webster *, the plays that would pre-

* The title of "All's Lost by Lust" might at least with equal propriety be given to the others.

cede and follow it, and to either of which, in my opinion, it is inferior. On the present play Langbaine observes, that the "passage of the Widow's finding her wedding-ring, which she dropped in crossing the Thames, in the belly of a fish which her maid bought accidentally in the market, is founded either upon the story of Polycrates of Samos, as the author may read at large in Herodotus, lib. 3, *sive Thalia; or upon the like story related of one Anderson of Newcastle, by Doctor Fuller, in his "Worthies of England.*" The story here referred to is this: "A citizen of Newcastle (whose name I take to be M. Anderson) talking with a friend of his upon Newcastle bridge, and fingering his ring, before he was aware let it fall into the river; and was much troubled with the losse of it, till by a fish caught in the river that losse was repaired, and his ring restored to him." It is quite impossible, however, that our author could have had this story from Fuller's Worthies, which was not published till many years after this drama was in print: he might, however, have found it, whence indeed Fuller himself took it, (and the story of Polycrates is likewise quoted there), in the preface to a little work called, "Vox Piscis, or the Book-Fish, containing three Treatises, which were found in the Belly of a Cod-fish in Cambridge Market, on Midsummer Eve last, Anno Domini 1626;" published in London in 1627. It is not noticed either by Langbaine or the editors of the Biograph. Dram. that this play is, in part, historical. This, however, is the case; and I have collected together, from various scattered notices in Stow and Strype, the best account I was enabled of Stephen Foster, his wife, and Alderman Bruin, three of the principal persons in the drama. Sir Stephen Foster was the son of Robert Foster of London, stockfishmonger; he was elected Sheriff of London in the year 1444, and Lord Mayor in 1454, and served as member for that city in the parliament held at Westminster in the thirteenth of Henry VI. Speaking of Ludgate, Strype says, (Append. p. 26.) "There happened to be a prisoner there, one Stephen Foster, who (as poor men are at this day) was a cryer at the grate, to

beg the benevolent charities of pious and commisserate benefactors that passed by. As he was doing his doleful office, a rich widow of London hearing his complaint, enquired of him what would release him? To which he answered, Twenty pound; which she in charity expended; and clearing him out of prison, entertained him in her service; who, afterward falling into the way of merchandize, and increasing as well in wealth as courage, wooed his mistress, Dame Agnes, and married her.

"Her riches and his industry brought him both great wealth and honour, being afterwards no less than Sir Stephen Foster, Lord Mayor of the honorable city of London: yet whilst he lived in this great honour and dignity, he forgot not the place of his captivity; but mindful of the sad and irksome place wherein poor men were imprisoned, bethought himself of enlarging it, to make it a little more delightful and pleasant for those who in aftertimes should be imprisoned and shut up therein. And, in order thereunto, acquainted his lady with this his pious purpose and intention, in whom likewise he found so affable and willing a mind to do good to the poor, that she promised to expend as much as he should do for the carrying on of the work; and having possessions adjoining thereunto, they caused to be erected and built the rooms and places following, that is to say, the paper house, the porch, the watch-hall, the upper and lower lumbries, the cellar, the long ward, and the chapel for divine service; in which chapel is an inscription on the wall, containing these words:

"*This chapel was erected and ordained for the divine worship and service of God, by the Right Honourable Sir Stephen Foster, Knight, some time Lord Maior of this honourable city, and by Dame Agnes his wife, for the use and godly exercise of the prisoners in this prison of Ludgate, Anno* 1454.

"He likewise gave maintenance for a preaching minister," and "ordained what he had so built, with that little which was before, should be free for all freemen, and

that they providing their own bedding, should pay nothing at their departure for lodging or chamber-rent."

There can be little doubt from the inscription in the chapel, that this worthy man was alive in the year 1454; it is still more certain from the following extract from Stow, that he was dead in 1463: "In the year 1463, the third of Edward the Fourth, Mathew Philip being mayor, in a common counsaile, at the request of the well-disposed, blessed, and devout woman, Dame Agnes Foster, *widow*, late wife to Stephen Foster, fishmonger, sometime mayor, for the comfort and reliefe of all the poore prisoners, certaine articles were established. *In primis*, that the new works then late edified by the same Dame Agnes, for the inlarging of the prison of Ludgate, from thenceforth should be had and taken as a parte and parcell of the saide prison of Ludgate, so that both the old and new works of Ludgate aforesaid, be one prison, gaile, keeping, and charge for evermore." To this Stow adds, "The said quadrant strongly builded of stone, by the before-named Stephen Foster, and Agnes his wife, contayneth a large walking place by grounde, the like roome it hath over it for lodgings, and over all a fayre leades to walke upon, well imbattayled, all for ease of prisoners, to the ende they shoulde have lodging and water free without charge: as by certaine verses grauen in copper, and fixed on the said quadrant, I have read in forme following:

Deuout soules that passe this way,
for Stephen Foster late mayor, hartely pray,
And Dame Agnes his spouse, to God consecrate,
that of pitty this house made for Lōdoners in Ludgate.
So that for lodging and water prisoners here nought pay,
as their keepers shall answere at dreadfull domes day.

"This plate, and one other of his armes, taken downe with the old gate, I caused to be fixed over the entrie of the said quadrant, but the verses being unhappily turned inward to the wall, the like in effect is graven outward in prose, declaring him to be a fishmonger, because some

upon a light occasion (as a maydens heade in a glasse window) had *fauled* him to bee a mercer, and to *have begged there* at Ludgate." "They were both buried (Stow, p. 163, edit. 1598) at Butolph's church, Billingsgate." How far the poet has deviated from the tradition as recorded by Strype, the reader will be now as well able to decide as myself: when I speak of *the tradition*, I allude only to the circumstance of his having been confined a prisoner in Ludgate, and to his release by his wife (by his *nephew* according to the drama); and this I do on the authority of Stow, the elder of the historians, who, in his concluding remarks, refers to it as a fable: Of the charitable acts of these worthy people there can be no doubt. In relation to the character of Bruin I find (Strype, vol. ii. p. 260) that "In the year 1197, Walter Brune, a citizen of London, and Rosia his wife, founded the hospital of Our Lady, called Domus Dei, or St. Mary the Spittle, without Bishopsgate in London, an house of such relief to the needy, that there was found standing at the surrender thereof nine score beds well furnished for receipt of poor people." The reader cannot fail to notice the gross anachronisms with which the plot of this drama abounds; something, however, may be said in excuse of the bringing together such men as Foster and Bruin; but the introduction of Henry III. is so wanton and unnecessary, that there can be little doubt it is an error of the printer's, and that Henry VI. is the character intended, in whose time Sir Stephen Foster lived. I did not, however, think it necessary to disturb the text; not out of respect to the quarto, for a more disgraceful work never issued from the press even of the printers of that age, but because the circumstance having been once noticed it becomes of little consequence. While on this subject I may just observe, that in the original this play is, with very trifling limitations, throughout printed as blank verse: by what possible rule or ear the division was made it is absolutely impossible to conceive; some scenes have without hesitation been reduced to prose; and by changing the construction of whole speeches innumerable

couplets have been restored: if yet the attentive reader shall discover passages, (and that many have escaped my notice I cannot doubt), on which he would willingly exercise his skill, I can only observe that he must not make too free with the pruning knife; that it is difficult to distinguish between a licentious metre and measured prose; and that very little good dramatic dialogue, of the higher walks, can be found, that, with moderate torturing to the eye and ear, may not pass for such metre.

I take this opportunity of saying, that a complete edition of Shirley's Plays having been lately announced as preparing for publication, I have abandoned the design of including any of them in the present selection.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF HIS DRAMATIC WORKS:

1. A New Wonder, A Woman never vext, C. 4to. 1632.
2. All's Lost by Lust, T. 4to. 1633.
3. Match at Midnight, C. 4to. 1633, D. C.
4. A Shoemaker's a Gentleman, C. 4to. 1638.

He wrote also, in conjunction with Day and Wilkins,

5. The Travels of Three English Brothers, 4to. 1607.

With Middleton,

6. A Fair Quarrel, C. to. 1617.
7. The World toss'd at Tennis, M. 4to. 1620.
8. The Spanish Gipsy, C. 4to. 1663.

And

9. The Changeling, T. 4to. 1653.

With Fletcher,

10. The Maid of the Mill, fol. 1647.

With Massinger and Middleton,

11. The Old Law, T. C. 4to. 1656.

With Dekker and Ford,

12. The Witch of Edmonton, T. C. 4to. 1658.

And (it is however very doubtful) with Shakspeare,

13. The Birth of Merlin, T. C. 4to. 1662.

With Webster,

14. The Cure for a Cuckold, C. 1661.

And

15. The Thracian Wonder, C. H. 4to. 1661.

And with Heywood,

16. Fortune by Land and Sea, C. 4to. 1665.

The following also are entered in his name on the Books of the Stationers' Company:

The Fool without Book.
A Knave in Print; or, One for Another.
The Nonesuch.
The Book of the Four honoured Loves.
And
The Parliament of Love.

It appears from Sir H. Herbert's Office Book, that *one* of the Rowleys wrote "A Match or no Match:" this is most probably our author's "Match at Midnight." And Mr. Chalmers observes, speaking of the Chronology of Henry VIII. "He [Shakspeare] undoubtedly knew *that Rowley had published*, in 1605, a drama, entitled *King Henry VIII.*" and he further informs us, that it was republished in 1613: these, however, are the only notices I remember to have met with relating to it. Rowley wrote also a pamphlet called, "A Search for Money; or, the lamentable Complaint for the Loss of the wandering Knight, Monsieur L'Argent," &c. 4to. 1609.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King Henry III.
Mountford.
Pembroke.
Arundel.
Cardinal.
Lord Mayor.
Old Foster.
Alderman Bruin.
Stephen, brother to Old Foster.
Robert, son to Old Foster.
Sir Godfrey Speedwell, } suitors to Jane.
Innocent Lambskin, }
Richard, factor to Old Foster.
George, factor to Bruin.
Doctor.
Host Boxall.
Jack, }
Dick, } Gamesters.
Hugh, }
Roger, the Clown, servant to the Widow.
Keeper of Ludgate.

Widow, the Woman never vext.
Mrs. Foster, wife to Old Foster.
Jane, daughter to Bruin.
Joan, servant to Widow.

A

NEW WONDER,

A

WOMAN NEVER VEXT.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter OLD FOSTER, ALDERMAN BRUIN, *and two* FACTORS*, RICHARD, *and* GEORGE.

Old Fost. THIS air has a sweet breath, Master Bruin.

Bruin. Your partner, sir.

Old Fost. Ay, and in good, I hope: this halcyon gale
Plays the lewd wanton with our dancing sails,
And makes 'em big† with vaporous envy.

Bruin. 'Tis no more yet, but then our fraught is full

* The word *Factor* is here used in a more limited sense than at present, as Richard and George appear to have been the exclusive servants of the other two.

† So Titania, in "Midsummer Night's Dream:"

"—— We have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind."

When she returns laden with merchandise
And safe deliver'd with our customage.

Old Fost. Such a delivery heaven send us;
But time must ripen it. Are our accounts made even?

George. To the quantity of a penny, if his agree with mine. What's yours, Richard?

Rich. Five hundred sixty pounds. Read the gross sum of your broad cloths.

George. 68 pieces at B, ss, and l; 57 at l, ss, and o*.

Rich. Just: Lead, nineteen ton.

Old Fost. As evenly we will lay our bosoms,
As our bottoms, with love as merchandise,
And may they both increase to infinities.

Bruin. Especially at home; that golden traffic, love,
Is scantier far than gold; and one mine of that
More worth than twenty argosies†
Of the world's richest treasure.

Old Fost. Here you shall dig, *(laying his hand on his breast)* and find your lading.

Bruin. Here's your exchange: and as in love
So we'll participate in merchandise.

* "68 pieces at *B*, *ss*, and *l*," &c. These are, I believe, the private marks of the merchants to denote the value of their goods, a sort of cipher known only to themselves: they may, however, allude to the marks affixed to the different packages in which the pieces were contained.

† *Argosies* appear from a note of Stevens's on the "Merchant of Venice," to have been ships of the largest size, and were corruptly so called from *ragosies*, or ships of Ragusa. Gremio, in the "Taming of the Shrew," talks of an *argosy* which he would settle on Bianca, and then tauntingly asks,

"What, have I chok'd you with an argosy?"

Old Fost. The merchant's casualty:
We always venture on uncertain odds,
Although we bear hope's emblem, the anchor, with us.
The wind brought it, let the wind blow 't away again;
Should not the sea sometimes be partner with us,
Our wealth would swallow us.

Bruin. A good resolve: but now I must be bold
To touch you with somewhat that concerns you.

Old Fost. I could prevent you: is't not my unthrifty brother?

Bruin. Nay, leave out the adjective (unthrifty);
Your brother, sir, 'tis he that I would speak of.

Old Fost. He cannot be nam'd without unthrifty, sir,
'Tis his proper epithet: would you conceit
But what my love has done for him
So oft, so chargeable, and so expensive,
You would not urge another addition.

Bruin. Nay, sir, you must not stay at quantity
Till he forfeit the name of brother,
Which is inseparable: he's now in Ludgate, sir,
And part of your treasure lies buried with him.

Old Fost. Ay, by vulgar blemish, but not by any good account:
There let him howl, 'tis the best stay he hath;
For nothing but a prison can contain him,
So boundless is his riot: twice have I rais'd
His decayed fortunes to a fair estate;
But with as fruitless charity as if I had thrown
My safe-landed substance back into the sea;
Or dress in pity some corrupted jade,
And he should kick me for my courtesy.
I am sure you cannot but hear what quicksands,

He finds out; as dice, cards, pigeon-holes *,
And which is more, should I not restrain it,
He'd make my state his prodigality.

Bruin. All this may be, sir; yet examples daily show
To our eyes, that prodigals return at last;
And the loudest roarer † (as our city phrase is)
Will speak calm and smooth; you must help with hope, sir:
Had I such a brother, I should think
That heaven had made him as an instrument
For my best charity to work upon:
This is a maxim sure, *Some are made poor,*
That rich men by giving may increase their store.
Nor think, sir,
That I do tax your labours and mean myself
For to stand idly by; for I have vow'd
If heaven but bless this voyage now abroad,
To leave some memorable relic after me
That shall preserve my name alive till doomsday.

Old Fost. Ay, sir, that work is good, and therein could I
Join with your good intents; but to relieve
A waste-good, a spendthrift——

* "*Pigeon-holes*" seems to have been the game which is sometimes called *trow-madame*, or *trol-my-dames*. See Stevens's note on "The Winter's Tale," Act IV. Scene II. And in Farmer's note on the same passage he will find a description of the manner of playing it.

† "*Roarer*" was the common cant word for the swaggering drunkard of our poet's age. Its occurrence is sufficiently common. So in Dekker's play, "If it be not a good Play the Devil's in it:"

"Those bloody thoughts will damn you into hell.

Scu. Do you think so? What becomes of our *roaring boys* then, *that stab healths one to another?*"

Bruin. Oh, no more, no more, good sir!

Old Fost. (To Rich.) Sirrah, when saw you my son Robert?

Rich. This morning, sir; he said he would go visit his uncle.

Old Fost. I pay for their meetings, I'm sure: that boy
Makes prize of all his fingers 'light upon
To relieve his unthrifty uncle.

Bruin. Does he rob? In troth, I commend him.

Old Fost. (To Rich.) 'Tis partly your fault, sirrah; you see't, and suffer it.

Rich. Sir, mine's a servant's duty, his a son's;
Nor know I better how to express my love
Unto yourself, than by loving your son.

Old Fost. By concealing of his pilferings.

Rich. I dare not call them so; he is my second master,
And methinks 'tis far above my limits
Either to check or to complain of him.

Bruin. Gramercy, Dick, thou mak'st a good construction;
(To Old Fost.) And your son Robert a natural nephew's part
To relieve his poor uncle.

Old Fost. 'Tis in neither well, sir: for note but the
Condition of my estate; I'm lately married
To a wealthy widow, from whom my substance
Chiefly does arise, she has observed this in her
Son-in-law, often complains and grudges at it,
And what foul broils such civil discords bring,
Few married men are ignorant of.

Enter MISTRESS FOSTER.

Nay, will you see a present proof of it?

M. Fost. Shall I not live to breathe a quiet hour?
I would I were a beggar with content
Rather than thus be thwarted for mine own.
Old Fost. Why, what's the matter, woman?
M. Fost. I'll rouse 'em up,
Though you regard not of my just complaints,
Neither in love to me, nor preserving me
From other injuries, both which you're tied to,
By all the rightful laws heavenly or humane;
But I'll complain, sir, where I will be heard.
Old Fost. Nay, thou'lt be heard too far.
M. Fost. Nay, sir, I will be heard:
Some awkward star threw out his unhappy fire
At my conception, and 'twill never quench
While I have heat in me. Would I were cold!
There would be bonfires made to warm defame:
My death would be a jubilee to some.
Old Fost. Why, sir, how should I minister remedy
And know not the cause?
Bruin. Mother-o'-pearl*! Woman, show your husband the cause.
M. Fost. Had he been a husband, sir, I had had no cause
[So] to complain: I threw down at his feet
The subjection of his whole estate: he did not
Marry me for love's sake, nor for pity;
But love to that I had; he now neglects
The love he had before: a prodigal
Is suffer'd to lay waste those worldly blessings
Which I long enclosed, intending for good uses.
Old Fost. That's my son.

* "Mother-o'-pearl!" this seems a cant expression, as Bruin several times uses it.

M. Fost. Ay, thou know'st it well enough;
he's the conduit-pipe
That throws it forth into the common sewer.
Old Fost. And th' other's my brother.
M. Fost. You may well shame,
As I do grieve the kindred; but I'd make
The one a stranger, the other a servant,
No son, nor brother; for they deserve neither
Of those offices.
Old Fost. Why did I ever cherish him! have
not I threaten'd him
With disinheritance for this disorder?
M. Fost. Why do you not perform it?
Old Fost. The other's in Ludgate.
M. Fost. No; he's in my house, approving to
my face
The charitable office of his kind nephew,
Who with his pilfering, purloin'd from me,
Has set him at liberty; if this may be suffer'd
I'll have no eyes to see.
Old Fost. Prithee content thyself, I'll see
A present remedy. Sirrah, go call 'em in:
This worthy gentleman shall know the cause,
And censure for us both with equity.
Bruin. Nay, good sir, let not me be so employ'd,
For I shall favour one for pity,
The other for your love's sake.

Enter ROBERT, *and* STEPHEN FOSTER.

Old Fost. Now, sir,
Are all my words with you so light esteem'd,
That they can take no hold upon your duty?
Rob. Misconstrue not, I beseech you.

M. Fost. Nay, he'll approve his good deeds, I warrant you.

Old Fost. And you, sir?

Steph. Well, sir.

Old Fost. I had thought you had been in Ludgate, sir?

Steph. Why you see where I am, sir.

Old Fost. Why, where are you, sir?

Steph. In debt, sir, in debt.

Old Fost. Indeed that's a place you can hardly be remov'd from; but this is not a place fit for one in debt. How came you out of prison, sirrah?

Steph. As I went into prison, sirrah, by the keepers.

Old Fost. (To Rob.) This was your work to let this bandog loose.

Rob. Sir, it was my duty to let my uncle loose.

Old Fost. Your duty did belong to me, and I did not command it.

Rob. You cannot make a separation, sir,
Betwixt the duty that belongs to me,
And love unto my uncle: as well you may
Bid me love my maker, and neglect
The creature which he hath bid me love*:
If man to man join not a love on earth,
They love not heaven, nor him that dwells above it;
Such is my duty; a strong correlative
Unto my uncle: why, he's half yourself.

Bruin. Believe me, sir, he has answered you well.

* Our poet here evidently alludes to a passage in the First Epistle of St. John, chap. iii. ver. 10.

Old Fost. He has not, worthy sir;
But to make void that false construction,
Here I disclaim the title of a brother;
And by that disclaim hast thou lost thy child's part:
Be thou engag'd for any debts of his,
In prison rot with him; my goods shall not
Purchase such fruitless recompense.

Steph. Then thou'rt a scurvy father, and a filthy brother.

M. Fost. Ay, ay, sir, your tongue cannot defame his reputation.

Steph. But your's can; for all the city reports what an abominable scold he has got to his wife.

Old Fost. If e'er I know thou keep'st him company,
I'll take my blessing from thee whilst I live,
And that which after me should bless thy estate.

Steph. And I'll proclaim thy baseness to the world;
Ballads I'll make, and make 'em tavern music
To sing thy churlish cruelty.

Old Fost. Tut, tut, these are babbles*.

Steph. Each festival day I'll come unto thy house,
And I will piss upon thy threshold.

Old Fost. You must be out of prison first, sir.

Steph. If e'er I live to see thee Sheriff of London,
I'll gild thy painted posts † *cum privilegio*,
And kick thy sergeants.

* *i. e.* Idle tales.

† It appears to have been the custom for the sheriff to have a post set up at his door as an indication of his office. So in the "Twelfth Night" of Shakspeare, Malvolio says of Cesario,

Rob. Nay, good uncle!

Steph. Why, I'll beg for thee, boy;
I'll break this leg, and bind it up again,
To pull out pity from a stony breast,
Rather than thou shalt want.

Old Fost. Ay, do; let him sear up his arm, and scarf it up
With two yards of rope; counterfeit two villains;
Beg under a hedge and share your bounty *:
But come not near my house;
Nor thou in's company, if thou'lt obey:
There's punishment for thee; for thee there's worse;
The loss of all that's mine, with my dear curse.

[*Exeunt.*

Manent STEPHEN *and* ROBERT.

Steph. Churl! dog! you churlish rascally miser!

Rob. Nay, good uncle, throw not foul language;
This is but heat, sir, and I doubt not but
To cool this rage with my obedience:
But, uncle, you must not then heap on such fuel.

Steph. Coz, I grieve for thee, that thou hast undergone
Thy father's curse, for love unto thy uncle.

Rob. Tut! that bond shall ne'er be cancel'd, sir.

"He'll stand at your door like a sheriff's post." See notes on Act I. Scene V. where the passage in the text has been quoted by Stevens.

* Our poet alludes here to the methods which are still frequently practised amongst beggars, of making artificial sores. The reader will find many of these mentioned by Prigg in Act II. Scene I. of the "Beggar's Bush" of Beaumont and Fletcher. In the quarto this speech is in horrible metre; and the same may be observed of nearly the whole remainder of this scene, and until the clown quits the stage in the next.

Steph. I pity that, i'faith.

Rob. Let pity then for me turn to yourself:
Bethink yourself, sir, of some course that might
Befit your estate, and let me guide it.

Steph. Ha, a course? S'foot! I have't*! Coz, canst lend me forty shillings? Could I but repair this old decay'd tenement of mine with some new plaster; for, alas, what can a man do in such a case as this?

Rob. Ay, but your course, uncle?

Steph. Tush! leave that to me, because thou shalt wonder at it: if you should see me in a scarlet gown within the compass of a gold chain, then I hope you'll say that I do keep myself in good compass: then, sir, if the cap of maintenance† do march before me, and not a cap be suffer'd to be worn in my presence, pray do not upbraid me with my former poverty; I cannot tell, state and wealth may make a man forget himself; but I beseech you do not; there are things in my head that you dream not of; dare you try me, coz?

Rob. Why, forty shillings, uncle, shall not keep
back
Your fortunes.

Steph. Why, gramercy, coz. *(Aside.)* Now if the dice do run right, this forty shillings may set

* "S'foot I hate," is the reading of the quarto.

† Caps of maintenance are said to be carried in state on occasions of great solemnity before the mayors of several cities in England. Stephen had before imagined himself arrayed with the gown and chain of an alderman, he is now describing his consequence as the future Lord Mayor of London.

me up again: to lay't on my back, and so to pawn it, there's ne'er a damn'd broker in the world will give me half the worth on't: no, whilst 'tis in ready cash, that's the surest way: seven is better than eleven; a pox take the bones*! an they will not favour a man sometimes.

Rob. Look you, uncle, there's forty shillings for you.

Steph. As many good angels guard thee, as thou hast given me bad ones to seduce me! for these deputy devils damn worse than the old ones. Now, coz, pray listen; listen after my transformation: I will henceforth turn an apostate to prodigality; I will eat cheese and onions and buy lordships; and will not you think this strange?

Rob. I am glad you're merry, uncle; but this is fix'd
Betwixt an uncle and a nephew's love;
Though my estate be poor, revenues scant,
Whilst I have any left, you shall not want.

Steph. Why, gramercy! by this hand I'll make thee an alderman before I die, do but follow my steps. [*Exeunt.*

Enter WIDOW *and* CLOWN.

Wid. Sirrah, will the churchman come I sent you for?

Clown. Yes, mistress, he will come: but pray resolve me one thing for my long service; what

* "The *bones!*" *i. e.* the dice.

business have you with the churchman? Is it to make your will, or to get you a new husband?

Wid. Suppose to make my will, how then?

Clown. Then I would desire you to remember me, mistress; I have serv'd you long, and that's the best service to a woman: make a good will if you mean to die, that it may not be said, *Though most women be long liv'd, yet they all die with an ill-will.*

Wid. So, sir; suppose it be for marriage?

Clown. Why, then, remember yourself, mistress: take heed how you give away the head; it stands yet upon the shoulders of your widowhood: the loving, embracing ivy has yet the upper place in the house; if you give it to the holly, take heed, there's pricks in holly; or if you fear not the pricks, take heed of the wands; you cannot have the pricks without the wands: you give away the sword, and must defend yourself with the scabbard: these are pretty instructions of a friend; I would be lothe to see you cast down, and not well taken up.

Wid. Well, sir, well, let not all this trouble you; See, he's come: will you be gone?

Enter DOCTOR *.

Clown. I will first give him a caveat, to use you as kindly as he can. *(To the Doct.)* If you find my mistress have a mind to this coupling at barley-break, let her not be the last couple to be left in hell.

* It is to be remembered that the Doctor here introduced, is a *divine* and not a physician.

Doct. I would I knew your meaning, sir.

Clown. If she have a mind to a fresh husband or so, use her as well as you can; let her enter into as easy bands as may be.

Doct. Sir, this is none of my traffic; I sell no husbands.

Clown. Then you do wrong, sir; for you take money for 'em: what woman can have a husband, but you must have custom for him? and often the ware proves naught too, not worth the impost.

Doct. Your man's pregnant †, and merry, mistress.

Wid. He's saucy, sir. Sirrah, you'll be gone?

Clown. Nay, at the second hand you'll have a fee too; you sell in the church, and they bring 'em again to your churchyard, you must have tollage: methinks if a man die whether you will or no, he should be buried whether you would or no.

Doct. Nay, now you wade too far, sir.

Wid. You'll be gone, sirrah?

Clown. Mistress, make him your friend; for he knows what rate good husbands are at; if there hath been a dearth of women of late, you may chance pick out a good prize; but take heed of a clerk.

Wid. Will you yet, sir, after your needless trouble,
Be gone, and bid the maids dress dinner?

† So in "Hamlet:"

"How *pregnant* sometimes his replies are."

Clown. Mistress, 'tis fasting day to-day, there's nothing but fish.

Wid. Let there be store of that; let bounty
Furnish the table, and charity
Shall be the voider. What fish is there, sirrah?

Clown. Marry, there is salmon, pike, and fresh cod, soles, maids, and plaice.

Wid. Bid 'em haste to dress 'em then.

Clown. Nay, mistress, I'll help 'em too; the maids shall first dress the pike and the cod, and then I'll dress the maids in the place you wot on. [*Exit Clown.*

Doct. You sent for me, gentlewoman?

Wid. Sir, I did; and to this end:
I have some scruples in my conscience;
Some doubtful problems which I cannot answer
Nor reconcile; I'd have you make them plain.

Doct. This is my duty: pray speak your mind.

Wid. And as I speak, I must remember heaven,
That gave those blessings which I must relate:
Sir, you now behold a wond'rous woman;
You only wonder at the epithet;
I can approve it good: guess at mine age.

Doct. At the half way 'twixt thirty and forty.

Wid. 'Twas not much amiss; yet nearest to the last.
How think you then, is not this a wonder?
That a woman lives full seven-and-thirty years
Maid to a wife, and wife unto a widow,
Now widow'd, and mine own, yet all this while
From the extremest verge of my remembrance,
Even from my weaning hour unto this minute,
Did never taste what was calamity?

I know not yet what grief is, yet have sought
An hundred ways for its acquaintance: with me
Prosperity hath kept so close a watch,
That even those things that I have meant a cross,
Have that way turn'd a blessing. Is it not strange?

Doct. Unparallel'd; this gift is singular,
And to you alone belonging: you are the moon,
For there's but one, all women else are stars,
For there are none of like condition.
Full oft, and many, have I heard complain
Of discontents, thwarts, and adversities,
But a second to yourself I never knew:
To groan under the superflux of blessings,
To have ever been alien unto sorrow.
No trip of fate? Sure it is wonderful.

Wid. Ay, sir, 'tis wonderful: but is it well?
For it is now my chief affliction.
I have heard you say, that the child of heaven
Shall suffer many tribulations;
Nay, kings and princes share them with their subjects:
Then I that know not any chastisement,
How may I know my part of childhood*?

Doct. 'Tis a good doubt; but make it not extreme.
'Tis some affliction, that you are afflicted
For want of affliction; cherish that:
Yet wrest it not to misconstruction;
For all your blessings are free gifts from heaven;
Health, wealth, and peace; nor can they turn to curses,

* Our poet alludes here to a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 7 and 8.

But by abuse. Pray let me question you:
You lost a husband, was it no grief to you?
Wid. It was; but very small: no sooner I
Had given it entertainment as a sorrow,
But straight it turn'd unto my treble joy:
A comfortable revelation prompts me then,
That husband (whom in life I held so dear)
Had chang'd a frailty to unchanging joys;
Methought I saw him stellified in heaven,
And singing hallelujahs 'mongst a quire
Of white-sainted souls: then again it spake,
And said; it was a sin for me to grieve
At his best good, that I esteemed best:
And thus this slender shadow of a grief
Vanish'd again.
Doct. All this was happy; nor can you wrest it from
A heavenly blessing: do not appoint the rod;
Leave still the stroke unto the magistrate:
The time is not past, but you may feel enough.
Wid. One taste more I had, although but little,
Yet I would aggravate to make the most on't;
Thus 'twas: the other day it was my hap,
In crossing of the Thames,
To drop that wedlock ring from off my finger,
That once conjoin'd me and my dead husband;
It sunk; I priz'd it dear; the dearer, 'cause it kept
Still in mine eye the memory of my loss;
Yet I griev'd the loss; and did joy withall,
That I had found a grief: and this is all
The sorrow I can boast of.
Doct. This is but small.
Wid. Nay, sure I am of this opinion,

That had I suffer'd a draught to be made for it,
The bottom would have sent it up again,
I am so wondrously fortunate.

Doct. You would not suffer it?

Enter CLOWN.

Wid. Not for my whole estate.

Clown. Oh, mistress, where are you? I think you are the fortunatest woman that ever breath'd on two shoes: the thief is found.

Wid. The thief! what thief? I never was so happy to be robb'd.

Clown. Bring him away, Jug: nay, you shall see the strangest piece of felony discover'd that ever you saw, or your great grandmother's grandam before, or after; a pirate, a water thief.

Wid. What's all this?

Clown. Bring him away, Jug: yet the villain would not confess a word till it was found about him.

Wid. I think the fellow's mad.

Clown. Did you not lose your wedding-ring the other day?

Wid. Yes, sir, but I was not robb'd of it.

Enter JOAN *with a Fish.*

Clown. No! well, thank him that brings it home then, and will ask nothing for his pains. You see this salmon?

Wid. Yes, what of it?

Clown. It cost but sixpence: but had the fisher

known the worth of it, 'twould have cost you forty shillings. Is not this your ring?

Wid. The very same.

Clown. Your maid Joan, examining this salmon, that she bought in the market, found that he had swallowed this gudgeon.

Wid. How am I vext with blessings! how think you, sir,
Is not this above wonder?

Doct. I am amaz'd at it.

Wid. First, that this fish should snatch it as a bait;
Then that my servant needs must buy that fish
Amongst such infinites of fish and buyers:
What fate is mine that runs all by itself
In unhappy happiness? My conscience dreads it.
Would thou hadst not swallowed it, or thou not bought it.

Clown. Alas! blame not the poor fish, mistress: he being a phlegmatic creature, took gold for restorative*. He took it fair; and he that gets gold, let him eat gold.

Wid. Nothing can hinder fate.

Doct. Seek not to cross it then.

Wid. (To Joan.) About your business! you have not pleas'd me in this.

Joan. By my maidenhead! if I had thought you would have ta'en it no kindlier, you should ne'er have been vext with sight on't; the garbage should have been the cook's fees at this time. [*Exit Joan.*

* "*Took gold for restorative.*" Gold was formerly used in medicine, and many imaginary virtues ascribed to it.

Clown. Now do I see the old proverb come to pass; *Give a woman luck, and cast her into the sea:* there's many a man would wish his wife good luck, on that condition he might throw her away so. But, mistress, there's one within would speak with you, that vexeth as fast against crosses, as you do against good luck.

Wid. I know her sure then, 'tis my gossip Foster. Request her in; here's good company, tell her.

Clown. I'll tell her so for my own credit's sake. [*Exit.*

Wid. You shall now see an absolute contrary: Would I had chang'd bosoms with her for a time! 'Twould make me better relish happiness.

Enter MISTRESS FOSTER *and* CLOWN.

M. Fost. Oh, friend and gossip, where are you? I am
O'erloaden with my griefs, and but in your bosom
I know not where to ease me.

Clown. I had rather help you to a close stool, an't please you.

M. Fost. Ne'er had woman more sinister fate;
All ominous stars were in conjunction
Even at my birth, and do still attend me.

Doct. This is a perfect contrary indeed.

Wid. What ails you, woman?

M. Fost. Unless seven witches had set spells about me,
I could not be so cross'd; never at quiet,
Never happy hour, not a minute's content.

Doct. You hurt yourself most with impatience.

M. Fost. Ay, ay, physicians 'minister with ease,

Although the patient do receive in pain:
Would I could think but of one joyful hour!

Clown. You have had two husbands to my knowledge; and if you had not one joyful hour between both, I would you were hang'd, i'faith.

M. Fost. Full fourteen years I liv'd a weary maid,
Thinking no joy till I had got a husband.

Clown. That was a tedious time indeed.

M. Fost. I had one lov'd me well, and then ere long
I grew into my longing peevishness.

Clown. There was some pleasure ere you came to that.

M. Fost. Then all the kindness that he would apply,
Nothing could please: soon after it he died.

Clown. That could be but little grief.

M. Fost. Then worldly care did so o'erload my weakness,
That I must have a second stay; I chose again,
And there begins my griefs to multiply.

Wid. It cannot be, friend; your husband's kind.

Doct. A man of fair condition, well reputed.

Clown. But it may be he has not that should please her.

Wid. Peace! sirrah. How can your sorrows increase from him?

M. Fost. How can they but o'erwhelm me? He keeps a son
That makes my state his prodigality;
To him a brother, one of the city scandals;
The one the hand, the other is the maw;
And between both my goods are swallowed up:

The full quantity that I brought amongst 'em
Is now consum'd to half.

Wid. The fire of your spleen wastes it:
Good sooth, gossip, I could laugh at thee; and only grieve
I have not some cause of sorrow with thee:
Prithee be temperate, and suffer.

Doct. 'Tis good counsel, mistress; receive it so.

Wid. Canst thou devise to lay them half on me?
And I'll bear 'em willingly.

M. Fost. Would I could! that I might laugh another while:
But you are wise to heed at others' harms;
You'll keep you happy in your widowhood.

Wid. Not I, in good faith, were I sure marriage
Would make me unhappy.

M. Fost. Try, try, you shall not need to wish;
You'll sing another song, and bear a part
In my grief's descant, when you're vex'd at heart:
Your second choice will differ from the first;
So oft as widows marry they are accurs'd.

Clown. Ay, curs'd widows are; but if they had all stiff husbands to tame 'em they'd be quiet enough.

Wid. You'll be gone, sir, and see dinner ready.

Clown. I care not if I do, mistress, now my stomach's ready;
Yet I'll stay a little an't be but to vex you.

Wid. When go you, sirrah?

Clown. I will not go yet.

Wid. Ha! ha! ha! thou makest me laugh at thee; prithee stay.

Clown. Nay, then I'll go to vex you.

[*Exit Clown.*

M. Fost. You have a light heart, gossip.

Wid. So should you, woman, would you be rul'd by me.
Come, we'll dine together; after walk abroad
Unto my suberb garden *; where if thoul't hear,
I'll read my heart to thee, and thou from thence
Shalt learn to vex thy cares with patience.

[*Exeunt.*

* These *suberb gardens* and *garden-houses* are constantly mentioned by the writers of that age. An extract from Stubbs's "Anatomy of Abuses," 1599, (quoted by Mr. Gifford in a note on "The Bondman,") will afford the reader some information. "In the suberbes of the citie, they [the women] have *gardens* either paled or walled round about very high, with their harbours and bowers fit for the purpose; and lest they might be espied in these open places, they have their *banqueting houses*, with galleries, turrets, and what not, therein sumptuously erected; wherein they may, and doubtless do, many of them, play the filthy persons."

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter HOST BOXALL, STEPHEN, JACK, DICK, *and* HUGH.

Host. Welcome, still my merchants of *bona Speranza*; what's your traffic, bullies? what ware deal you in? cards, dice, bowls, or pigeon-holes? sort 'em yourselves: either passage, novum, or mumchance *? Say, my brave bursmen, what's your recreation?

Steph. Dice, mine Host. Is there no other room empty?

Host. Not a hole unstop'd in my house, but this, my thrifts.

Jack. Miscall us not for our money, good mine Host; we are none of your *thrifts*; we have 'scap'd that scandal long ago.

Dick. Yes, *his thrifts* we are, Jack, though not our own.

Host. Tush, you are young men, 'tis too soon to thrive yet: he that gathers young, spends when he's old: 'tis better to begin ill, and end well, than to begin well and end ill. Miserable fathers have for the most part unthrifty sons; leave not too much for your heirs, boys.

* *Passage* and *novum* were games at *dice*, and *mumchance* one at cards. See Stevens's note on a passage in "Love's Labour Lost," Act V.; and Reed's on one in the "Jovial Crew" of Brome, Act III.

Jack. He says well, i'faith: why should a man trust to executors?

Steph. As good trust to hangmen as to executors. Who's in the bowling alley, mine Host?

Host. Honest traders, thrifty lads, they are rubbing on't; towardly boys, every one strives to lie nearest the mistress.

Steph. Give's a bale of dice *.

Host. Here, my brave wags.

Steph. We fear no counters now, mine Host, so long as we have your bale so ready †. Come, trip.

Jack. Up with's heels.

Dick. Down with them.

Hugh. Now the dice are mine; set me now a fair board; a fair passage, sweet bones! Boreas ‡!

[*A noise below in the bowling-alley of betting and wrangling.*

Host. How now, my fine trundletails §; my wooden cosmographers; my bowling-alley in an uproar? Is Orlando up in arms? I must be stickler; I am constable, justice, and beadle

* By a bale a *pair* of dice only is meant. See notes, vol. ii. p. 255.

† Stephen puns on the word *bale* and *bail*.

‡ It appears from an after remark of Stephen's, that the game they were playing at was *passage*. *Boreas* may be a punning invocation to the north wind to assist him in his *passage*, or an allusion to the noise which arises at the same time in the bowling-alley.

§ The *trundletail* was a species of dog in little estimation, I believe; it is mentioned in the "Lear" of Shakspeare. So Ursula to Quar. in "Bartholomew Fair," "Do you sneer, you dog's-head, you *trundle-tail!*" But here the Host only puns on the rolling or *trundling* the bowl at the game.

in mine own house; I accuse, sentence, and punish: have amongst you! look to my box, boys*! He that breaks the peace, I break his pate for recompense: look to my box, I say!

[*Exit.*

Steph. A pox o' your box! I shall ne'er be so happy to reward it better; set me fair; aloft now. [*The dice are thrown.*

Jack. Out.

Steph. What was't?

Dick. Two treys and an ace.

Steph. Seven still, pox on't! that number of the deadly sins haunts me damnably. Come, sir, throw.

Jack. Prithee invoke not so, all sinks too fast already.

Hugh. It will be found again in mine Host's box. [*The dice are thrown.*

Jack. In still, two thieves and choose thy fellow.

Steph. Take the miller.

Jack. Have at them, i'faith. [*Throws.*

Hugh. For a thief, I'll warrant you; who'll you have next?

Jack. Two quatres and a trey.

* The Host was probably *box-keeper*, or groom-porter. And it appears by an extract from the Monthly Mirror (quoted by Mr. Gifford), that, "if the caster throws three mains, or wins by throwing three times successively, he pays to the *box-keeper, for the use of the house*, a stipulated sum." It was probably these profits that the Host directs them to look to; or that in our poet's time, or at a different game, a regular per centage might have been paid to the box-keeper on the money staked; or the Host might have been *banker* and staked against the players, as now at Rouge et Noir, and some other games, I believe.

Steph. I hope we shall have good cheer, when two caters and a tray go to th' market*.

Enter HOST.

Host. So all's whist; they play upon the still pipes now; the bull-beggar comes when I show my head: silence is a virtue, and I have made 'em virtuous: let 'em play still till they be pennyless; pawn till they be naked; so they be quiet, welcome, and welcome. *(A noise above at cards.)* How now! how now! my roaring Tamberlaine, take heed, the Soldan comes: an 'twere not for profit, who would live amongst such bears? why Ursa Major, I say, what in Capite Draconis? is there no hope to reclaim you? shall I never live in quiet for you?

Dick. Good mine Host, still 'em: civil gamesters cannot play for 'em.

Host. I come amongst you, you maledictious slaves! I'll utter you all; some I'll take ready money for, and lay up the rest in the stocks: look to my box, I say!

Steph. Your box is like your belly, mine Host, it draws all: now for a suit of apparel.

[*Throws the dice.*

Jack. At whose suit, I pray? You're out again with the threes.

Steph. 'Foot! I think my father threw three when I was begotten: pox on't! I know now why I am so haunted with threes.

* It is perhaps unnecessary to notice that Stephen puns between the *quatre* and *trey* on the dice, and the *cater* or *caterer* who buys the provisions, and the *tray* in which it is brought home.

Jack. Why, I prithee?

Steph. I met the third part of a knave as I came.

Jack. The third part of a knave? s'foot! what thing's that?

Steph. Why, a sergeant's yeoman, man; the supervisor himself is but a whole one, and he shares but a groat in the shilling with him.

Dick. That's but the third part indeed: but goes he no further?

Steph. No, he rests there.

Hugh. Come, let's give o'er.

Steph. I thank you, sir, and so much a looser? there's but the waistband of my suit left *: now, sweet bones!

Hugh. Twelve at all. [*Throws.*

Steph. Soft, this die is false.

Hugh. False? you do him wrong, sir; he's true to his master.

Steph. Fullum!

Dick. I'll be hang'd then! where's Putney, then, I pray you †?

Steph. 'Tis false, and I'll have my money again.

Hugh. You shall have cold iron with your silver then.

Steph. Ay! have at you, sir.

* Stephen means, perhaps, that but one shilling was left of the forty his nephew had supplied him with.

† *Fullum* or *Fulhem* was a well-known name for false dice. (See vol. iii. p. 403.) One of the cheats therefore sneeringly asks if one of the dice was *Fulham*, which of them was *Putney*, as Putney is on the Thames immediately opposite to Fulham.

Enter HOST *and* YOUNG FOSTER.

Host. I think he's here, sir.

[*They draw their swords and fight. Young Foster assists his uncle and the Host, and the cheats are beaten. Whilst they are fighting the bowlers enter and steal away their cloaks.*

Rob. I am sure he's now, sir.

Hugh. Hold! hold! an you be gentlemen, hold!

Rob. Get you gone, varlets, or there's hold to be taken.

Host. Nay, sweet sir, no bloodshed in my house; I am lord of misrule; pray you put up, sir.

Omnes. S'foot! mine Host, where are our cloaks?

Host. Why, this is quarrelling: make after in time: some of your own crew, to try the weight, has lifted them: look out I say.

Jack. There will ever be thieves in a dicing house till thou be'st hang'd, I'll warrant thee.

[*Exit.*

Steph. Mine Host, my cloak was lin'd through with orange tawny velvet.

Host. How, your cloak? I ne'er knew thee worth one.

Steph. You're a company of coney-catching rascals: is this a suit to walk without a cloak in?

Rob. Uncle, is this the reformation that you promis'd me?

Steph. Coz, shall I tell thee the truth? I had diminish'd but sixpence of the forty shillings; by chance meeting with a friend, I went to a tailor, bargain'd for a suit, it came to full forty, I tender'd my thirty nine and a half, and do you think the scabby-wristed rascal would [not] trust me for sixpence.

Rob. Your credit is the better, uncle.

Steph. Pox on him! if the tailor had been a man, I had had a fair suit on my back: so venturing for the other tester——

Rob. You lost the whole bedstead*.

Steph. But after this day, I protest coz, you shall never see me handle those bones again; this day I break up school: if ever you call me unthrift after this day, you do me wrong.

Rob. I should be glad to wrong you so, uncle.

Steph. And what says your father yet, coz?

Rob. I'll tell you that in your ear.

Enter MISTRESS FOSTER, WIDOW, *and* CLOWN.

M. Fost. Nay, I pray you, friend, bear me company a little this way; for into this dicing-house I saw my good son-in-law enter, and 'tis odds but he meets his uncle here.

Wid. You cannot tire me, gossip, in your company; 'tis the best affliction I have to see you impatient.

M. Fost. Ay, ay, you may make mirth of my sorrow.

* Robert puns on the word *tester*, which signifies the cover of a bed as well as a sixpence.

Clown. We have hunted well, mistress; do you not see the hare's in sight?

M. Fost. Did not I tell you so? ay, ay, there's good counsel between you; the one would go afoot to hell, the other the horseway.

Rob. Mother, I am sorry you have trod this path.

M. Fost. Mother? hang thee, wretch! I bore thee not;
But many afflictions I have borne for thee:
Wert thou mine own, I'd see thee stretch'd a handful,
And put thee a coffin into the cart,
Ere thou shouldst vex me thus.

Rob. Were I your own, you could not use me worse than you do.

M. Fost. I'll make thy father turn thee out for ever,
Or else I'll make him wish him in his grave.
You'll witness with me, gossip, where I've found him.

Clown. Nay, I'll be sworn upon a book of calico for that.

Rob. It shall not need; I'll not deny that I was with my uncle.

M. Fost. And that shall disinherit thee, if thy father
Be an honest man: thou hadst been better
To have been born a viper, and eat thy way
Through thy mother's womb into the world,
Than to tempt my displeasure.

Steph. Thou liest, Xantippe! it had been better
Thou'dst been press'd to death under two Irish rugs,

Than to ride honest Socrates, thy husband, thus,
And abuse his honest child.

M. Fost. Out, raggamuffin! dost thou talk? I shall see thee
In Ludgate again shortly.

Steph. Thou liest again: 'twill be at Moorgate, beldam, where I shall see thee in the ditch dancing in a cucking-stool*.

M. Fost. I'll see thee hang'd first.

Steph. Thou liest again.

Clown. Nay, sir, you do wrong to give a woman so many lies, she had rather have had twice so many standings, than one lie.

M. Fost. I'll lie with him, I'll warrant him.

Steph. You'll be a whore then.

Clown. Little less, I promise you, if you lie with him.

Steph. If you complain upon mine honest coz,
And that his father be offended with him,
The next time I meet thee, though it be i' th' street,
I'll dance i' th' dirt upon thy velvet cap;
Nay worse, I'll stain thy ruff; nay, worse than that,
I'll do thus. [*Holds a wisp* †.

* There was formerly a prison at Moorgate as well as at Ludgate; though Stephen means, I conceive, that the next time she would see him would be when attracted to that spot to see *the operation of ducking performed on her as a scold.* The ditch, as appears from Stow, was called *deep-ditch*; but whether celebrated for exhibitions of this nature or not, I cannot say. It is mentioned in the "First Part of Henry IV."

† That *a wisp* was in some way made use of for the punishment or exposure of a scold, is evident from the notes on a passage in the "Third Part of Henry VI." (Act II. Scene II.) From the verses quoted by Malone it seems probable that the wearing of the wisp was in some way connected with, or made part of, the ceremony of the skimmington.

M. Fost. Oh, my heart, gossip, do you see this? Was ever
Woman thus abus'd?

Wid. Methinks 'tis good sport, i'faith.

M. Fost. Ay, I am well recompens'd to complain to you:
Had you such a kindred——

Wid. I would rejoice in't, gossip.

M. Fost. Do so; choose here then. Oh, my heart! but I'll do your errand! oh, that my nails were not par'd! but I'll do your errand! Will you go, gossip?

Wid. No, I'll stay awhile and tell 'em out with patience.

M. Fost. I cannot hold a joint still! Dost wisp me, thou tatterdemalion? I'll do your errands! if I have a husband. Oh, that I could spit wildfire! my heart, oh, my heart! if it does not go pantle, pantle, pantle in my belly, I am no honest woman: but I'll do your errands!

[*Exit Mistress Foster.*

Rob. Kind gentlewoman, you have some patience.

Wid. I have too much, sir.

Rob. You may do a good office, and make yourself a peaceful moderator betwixt me and my angry father, whom his wife hath mov'd to spleen against me.

Wid. Sir, I do not disallow the kindness
Your consanguinity renders; I would not teach
You otherwise: I'd speak with your uncle, sir,
If you'll give me leave.

Clown. (To Rob.) You may talk with me, sir, in the meantime. [*Exit Robert and Clown.*

Steph. With me would you talk, gentlewoman?

Wid. Yes, sir, with you: you are a brave unthrift.

Steph. Not very brave neither, yet I make a shift.

Wid. When you have a clean shirt.

Steph. I'll be no pupil to a woman; leave your discipline.

Wid. Nay, pray you hear me, sir, I cannot chide; I'll but give you good counsel: 'tis not a good Course that you run.

Steph. Yet I must run to th' end of it.

Wid. I would teach you a better, if you'd stay where you are.

Steph. I would stay where I am if I had any money.

Wid. In the dicing house?

Steph. I think so too; I have play'd at *passage* all this while, now I'd go to *hazard.*

Wid. Dost thou want money? Thou art worthy to be tatter'd! hast thou no wit now thy money's gone?

Steph. 'Tis all the portion I have; I have nothing to maintain me but my wit; my money is too little, I'm sure.

Wid. I cannot believe thy wit's more than thy money: a fellow so well limb'd, so able to do good service, and want?

Steph. Why, mistress, my shoulders were not made for a frock and a basket, nor a coal-sack; no, nor my hands to turn a trencher at a table's side.

Wid. I like that resolution well; but how

comes it then, that thy wit leaves thy body unfurnish'd? Thou art very poor?

Steph. The fortune of the dice you see.

Wid. They are the only wizards, I confess,
The only fortune-tellers; but he that goes
To seek his fortune from them, must never hope
To have a good destiny allotted him:
Yet it is not the course that I dislike in thee,
But that thou canst not supply that course,
And outcross them that cross thee: were I as thou art——

Steph. You'd be as beggarly as I am.

Wid. I'll be hang'd first.

Steph. Nay, you must be well hang'd ere you can be as I am.

Wid. So, sir, I conceit you: were I as well hang'd then as you could imagine, I would tell some rich widow such a tale in her ear——

Steph. Ha! some rich widow? By this pennyless pocket, I think 'twere not the worst way.

Wid. I'd be asham'd to take such a fruitless oath: I say, seek me out some rich widow; promise her fair; she's apt to believe a young man; Marry her, and let her estate fly; no matter, 'tis charity; twenty to one some rich miser rak'd it together; this is none of Hercules' labours.

Steph. Ha? Let me recount these articles: *seek her out; promise her fair; marry her; let her estate fly.* But where should I find her?

Wid. The easiest of all: why, man, they are more common than tavern bushes; two fairs might be furnish'd every week in London with 'em, though no foreigners came in, if the charter

were granted once: nay, 'tis thought, if the horse-market be remov'd, that Smithfield shall be so employ'd; and then, I'll warrant you, 'twill be as well furnish'd with widows as 'twas with sows, cows, and old trotting jades before.

Steph. S'foot! if it were, I would be a chapman; I'd see for my pleasure, and buy for my *love*, for *money* I have none.

Wid. Thou shalt not stay the market, if thou'lt be rul'd: I'll find thee out a widow, and help in some of the rest too, if thou'lt but promise me the last, but to let her estate fly: for she's one I love not, and I'd be glad to see that revenge on her.

Steph. Spend her estate? were 't five aldermens. I'll put you in security for that; s'foot! all my neighbours shall be bound for me; nay, my kind sister-in-law shall pass her word for that.

Wid. Only this I'll enjoin you, to be matrimonially honest to her for your own health's sake: all other injuries shall be blessings to her.

Steph. I'll bless her then; I ever drunk so much, that I was never great feeder; give me drink, and my pleasure, and a little flesh serves my turn.

Wid. I'll shew thee the party: what sayest thou to myself?

Steph. Yourself, gentlewoman? I would it were no worse: I have heard you reputed a rich widow.

Wid. I have a lease of thousands at least, sir.

Steph. I'll let out your leases for you, if you'll allow me the power, I'll warrant you.

Wid. That's my hope, sir; but you must be honest withall.

Steph. I'll be honest with some; if I can be honest with all, I will too.

Wid. Give me thy hand; go home with me, I'll give thee better clothes; and, as I like thee then, we'll go further; we may chance make a blind bargain of it.

Steph. I can make no blind bargain, unless I be in your bed, widow.

Wid. No, I bar that, sir; let's begin honestly, howe'er we end: marry for the waste of my estate; spare it not; do thy worst.

Steph. I'll do bad enough, fear it not.

Wid. Come, will you walk, sir?

Steph. No, widow, I'll stand to no hazard of blind bargains; either promise me marriage, and give me earnest in a handfast, or I'll not budge a foot.

Wid. No, sir? are you grown so stout already?

Steph. I'll grow stouter when I am married.

Wid. I hope thou'lt vex me.

Steph. I'll give you cause, I'll warrant you.

Wid. I shall rail and curse thee I hope; yet I'd not have thee give over neither; for I would be vext: here's my hand, I am thine, thou art mine, I'll have thee with all faults.

Steph. You shall have one with some an you have me.

Enter ROBERT *and* CLOWN.

Wid. Here's witness: *(to Rob.)* come hither, sir; cousin I must call you shortly; and you, sirrah, be witness to this match; here's man and wife.

Rob. I joy at mine uncle's happiness, widow.

Clown. I do forbid the bans: alas, poor shag-rag, my mistress does but gull him. *(To Steph.)* You may imagine it to be twelfth-day at night, and the bean found in the corner of your cake, but 'tis not worth a vetch, I'll assure you *.

Wid. You'll let me dispose of myself, I hope?

Clown. You love to be merry, mistress: come, come, give him four farthings, and let him go; he'll pray for his good dame, and be drunk. Why, if your blood does itch that way, we'll stand together; *(places himself by the side of Steph.)* how think you? I think here is the sweeter bit *(pointing to himself)*; you see this

* The clown alludes to the *then* manner of choosing the king and queen on Twelfth Day, which was as follows. With the ingredients of which the cake or cakes, for there was probably one for each sex, were composed, a *bean* and *pea* were mixed up, and the two persons who were so fortunate as to find these in their respective portions were declared king and queen for the night. Thus in Herrick's "Hesperides:"

"Now, now, the mirth comes,
With the cake full of plums,
Where *bean's* the *king of the sport here;*
Beside we must know,
The *pea* also
Must revel, *as queen*, in the court here."

This method of election, which we find referred to as early as Edward III. was common at the beginning of the sixteenth century to both our universities. The curious reader will collect further information on the subject from Brand's Pop. Ant.

nit*, and you see this louse, you may crack o' your choice, if you choose here.

Wid. You have put me to my choice then; see, here I choose: this is my husband; thus I begin the contract. [*Kisses Stephen.*

Steph. 'Tis seal'd; I am thine. Now, coz, fear no black storms; if thy father thunder, come to me for shelter.

Wid. His word is now a deed, sir.

Rob. I thank you both. Uncle, what my joy conceives, I cannot utter yet.

Clown. I will make black Monday of this! ere I suffer this disgrace, the kennel shall run with blood and rags.

Rob. Sir, I am your opposite.

Clown. I have nothing to say to you, sir; I aim at your uncle.

Rob. He has no weapon.

Clown. That's all one, I'll take him as I find him.

Wid. I have taken him so before you, sir: will you be quiet?

Steph. Thou shalt take me so too, Hodge, for I'll be thy fellow, though thy mistress's husband. Give me thy hand.

[*Exeunt Widow, Stephen, and Robert.*

Clown. I'll make you seek your fingers among the dogs if you come to me. *My fellow?* You lousy companion, I scorn thee. S'foot! is't come to this? Have I stood all this while to my mis-

* The quarto reads, "*nap;*" and I am not certain of the propriety of the alteration, as the Clown may allude to Stephen's dress.

tress, an honest, handsome, plain-dealing, serving-creature, and she to marry a whoreson *tityre tu tattere* with never a good rag about him? *(Draws his sword and puts his cap on the point of it.)* Stand thou to me, and be my friend; and since my mistress has forsaken me——

Enter ROBERT.

Rob. How now? what's the matter?

Clown. 'Twas well you came in good time.

Rob. Why, man?

Clown. I was going the wrong way.

Rob. But tell me one thing, I apprehend not; why didst lay thy cap upon the sword's point?

Clown. Dost not thou know the reason of that? why, 'twas to save my belly: dost thou think I am so mad to cast myself away for e'er a woman of 'em all? I'll see 'em hang'd first!

Rob. Come, Roger, will you go?

Clown. Well, since there is no remedy, oh, tears be you my friend!

Rob. Nay, prithee, Roger, do not cry.

Clown. I cannot choose; nay, I will steep
Mine eyes in crying tears, and crying weep.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter ALDERMAN BRUIN, SIR GODFREY SPEEDWELL, INNOCENT LAMBSKIN, *and* MISTRESS JANE.

Bruin. Gentlemen, you're welcome; that once well pronounc'd has a thousand echoes: let it suffice, I have spoke it to the full: here's your affairs, here's your merchandise, this is your prize: [*Pointing to Jane.*
If you can mix your names, and gentle bloods,
With the poor daughter of a citizen;
I make the passage free, to greet and court,
Traffic the mart of love, clap hands and strike
The bargain through; (she pleas'd) and I shall like.

Speed. 'Tis good ware, believe me, sir, I know that by mine own experience; for I have handled the like many times in my first wife's days; ay, by knighthood! sometimes before I was married too; therefore I know't by mine own experience.

Lamb. Well, sir, I know by observation as much as you do by experience; for I have known many gentlemen have taken up such ware as this is, but it has lain on their hands as long as they liv'd; this I have seen by observation.

Jane. (Aside.) I am like to have a couple of fair chapmen; if they were at my own dispose, I would willingly raffle them both at twelvepence

a share; they would be good food for a new plantation; the one might mend his experience, and the other his observation very much.

Speed. Sir, let me advise you; I see you want experience: meddle no further in this case, 'twill be the more credit for your observation; for I find by my experience you are but shallow.

Lamb. But shallow, sir? Your experience is a little wide; you shall find I will be as deep in this case as yourself; my observation has been where your experience must wait at door: yet I will give you the fore horse place, and I will be in the thills, because you are the elder tree, and I the young plant; put on your experience, and I will observe.

Speed. Sweet virgin, to be prolix and tedious, fits not experience; short words and large deeds are best pleasing to women.

Jane. So, sir.

Speed. My name is Speedwell by my father's copy.

Jane. Then you never serv'd for't it seems.

Speed. Yes, sweet feminine! I have serv'd for it too: for I found my nativity suited to my name; as my name is Speedwell, so have I sped well in divers actions.

Jane. It must needs be a fair and comely suit then.

Lamb. You observe very well, sweet virgin; for his nativity is his doublet, which is the upper part of his suit; and his name is in's breeches, for that part which is his name, he defiles many times.

Speed. Your observation is corrupt, sir: let

me show mine own tale: I say, sweet beauty, my name is Speedwell; my godfather by his bounty (being an old soldier, and having serv'd in the wars as far as Bulloigne, therefore) call'd my name Godfrey, a title of large renown *; my wealth and wit has added to those, the paraphrase of knighthood; so that my name in the full longitude is called Sir Godfrey Speedwell, a name of good experience.

Jane. If every quality you have be as large in relation as your name, sir, I should imagine the best of them, rather than hear them reported.

Speed. You say well, sweet modesty; a good imagination is good, and shows your good experience.

Lamb. Nay, if names can do any good, I beseech you observe mine: my name is Lambskin, a thing both hot and harmless.

Jane. On, sir; I would not interrupt you, because you should be brief.

Lamb. My godfather seeing in my face some notes of disposition, in my cradle did give me the title of Innocent †, which I have practis'd all my lifetime; and since my father's decease, my wealth has purchas'd me in the vanguard of my name, the paraphrase of gentility; so that I am call'd *Master* Innocent Lambskin.

Jane. In good time: and what trade was your father, sir?

* "*Godfrey, a title of large renown;*" an allusion to the title of Fairfax's translation of Tasso's Jerusalem, which is, "Godfrey of Bulloigne."

† *Innocent*, it must be remembered, in the language of our old dramatic writers, denotes *an idiot*.

Lamb. My father was of an occupation before he was a tradesman: for, as I have observed in my father's and mother's report, they set up together in their youth; my father was a starch-maker, and my mother a laundress; so being partners they did occupy * long together before they were married; then was I born.

Jane. What, before your father was married?

Lamb. Truly a little after; I was the first fruits, as they say; then did my father change his copy, and set up a brewhouse.

Jane. Ay, then came your wealth in, sir.

Lamb. Your observation's good; I have carried the tallies † at my girdle seven year together with much delight and observation; for I did ever love to deal honestly in the nick.

Jane. A very innocent resolution.

Speed. Your experience may see his coarse education: but to the purpose, sweet female; I do love that face of yours.

Jane. Sir, if you love nothing but my face, I cannot sell it from the rest.

Lamb. You may see his slender observation:

* "They did *occupy*." There is, I believe, a latent meaning in the use of this word. Doll Tearsheet says of Pistol, in the "Second Part of Henry IV." "These villains will make the word captain as odious as the word *occupy*; which was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted." See note, vol. iii. p. 175.

† "*Tallies*," says Johnson, "*are sticks cut in conformity to others, by which accounts were kept.*" Jack Cade reproaches the Lord Say, "with having caused printing to be used, whereas before no other books were made use of by their forefathers, but the score and *tally*. And Cade has the Exchequer Office on his side, where accounts are still partially kept after this most barbarous fashion.

sweet virgin, I do love your lower parts better than your face.

Speed. Sir, you do interrupt and thwart my love.

Lamb. Ay, sir, I am your rival, and I will thwart your love; for your love licks at the face, and my love shall be arsy-versy to yours.

Jane. I would desire no better wooing of so bad suiters.

Steph. Mistake me not, kind heart.

Lamb. He calls you tooth-drawer by way of experience*.

Speed. In loving your face, I love all the rest of your body, as you shall find by experience.

Jane. Well, sir, you love me then?

Speed. Let your experience make a trial.

Jane. No, sir, I'll believe you rather, and I thank you for't.

Lamb. I love you too, fair maid, double and treble, if it please you.

* The meaning of the allusion here is not very evident: I am inclined to think, however, that *kind heart* was the "*travelling name*" of some notorious quack tooth-drawer, or a cant name given to the whole race of them. So the stage-keeper, in the Induction to "Bartholomew Fair," when expressing his fear of the author's success, says, "he has ne'er a sword and buckler man in his fair, nor a little Davy, to take toll of the bawds there, as in my time; nor a *kind heart, if any body's teeth should chance to ake in his play.*" And further, it is part of the "covenant and agreement," in the same Induction, that the audience shall not "look back to the sword and buckler age of Smithfield, but content themselves with the present. Instead of a little Davy, to take toll of the bawds, the author doth promise a strutting horse-courser, with a leer drunkard, two or three to attend him in as good equipage as you would wish. *And then for kind heart the tooth-drawer*, a fine oily pig-woman, with," &c. &c.

Jane. I thank you too, sir; I am so much beholding to you both, I am afraid I shall never requite it.

Speed. Requite *one*, sweet chastity, and let it be Sir Godfrey, with the correspondency of your love to him; I will maintain you like a lady; and it is brave, as I know by experience.

Lamb. I will maintain you like a gentlewoman: and that may be better maintenance than a lady's, as I have found by observation.

Speed. How dare you maintain that, sir?

Lamb. I dare maintain it with my purse, sir.

Speed. I dare cross it with my sword, sir.

[*Lays his hand on his sword.*

Lamb. If you dare cross my purse with your sword, sir, I'll lay an action of suspicion of felony to you; that's flat, sir.

Jane. Nay, pray you gentlemen, do not quarrel till you know for what.

Bruin. Oh, no quarrelling, I beseech you, gentlemen! the reputation of my house is soil'd if any uncivil noise arise in't.

Lamb. Let him but shake his blade at me, and I'll throw down my purse, and cry a rape; I scorn to kill him, but I'll hang his knighthood, I warrant him, if he offer assault and battry on my purse.

Bruin. Nay, good sir, put up your sword.

Speed. You have confin'd him prisoner for ever: I hope your experience sees he's a harmless thing.

Enter GEORGE.

George. Sir, here's young Master Foster requests to speak with you.

Bruin. Does he? Prithee request him [in.]—Gentlemen, please you taste the sweetness of my garden awhile, and let my daughter bear you company.

Speed. Where she is leader, there will be followers.

Jane. (Aside to her father.) You send me to the gallies, sir; pray you redeem me as soon as you can: these are pretty things for mirth, but not for serious uses.

Bruin. Prithee be merry with them then awhile, if but for courtesy; thou hast wit enough: but take heed they quarrel not.

Jane. Nay, I dare take in hand to part 'em without any danger; but I beseech you let me not be too long a prisoner. Will you walk, gentlemen?

Lamb. If it please you to place one of us for your conduct, otherwise this old coxcomb and I shall quarrel.

Jane. Sir Godfrey, you are the eldest; pray lead the way.

Speed. With all my heart, sweet virgin. *(Aside.)* Ah! ah! this place promises well in the eyes of experience. Master Innocent, come you behind.

Lamb. Right, sir; but I put the gentlewoman before, and that is the thing I desire; and there your experience halts a little.

Speed. When I look back, sir, I see your nose behind.

Lamb. Then when I look back, your nose stands here.

Speed. Sweet lady, follow experience.

Lamb. And let observation follow you.

[*Exeunt.*

Bruin. So: now request you Master Foster in, George: but hark; does that news hold his own still, that our ships are so near return, as laden on the Downs with such a wealthy fraughtage?

George. Yes, sir, and the next tide purpose to put into the river: Master Foster, your partner, hath now receiv'd more such intelligence, with most of the particulars of your merchandise; your venture is return'd with treble blessings.

Bruin. Let him be ever bless'd that sent! George, now call in the young man; and hark ye, George; from him run to my partner, and request him to me; this news I'm sure makes him a joyful merchant; for my own part, I'll not forget my vow. [*Exit George.*

This free addition heaven hath lent my state,
As freely back to heaven I'll dedicate.

Enter ROBERT FOSTER.

Ay, marry, sir, would this were a third suitor to my daughter Jane! I should better like him than all that's come yet. Now, Master Foster, are your father and yourself yet reconcil'd?

Rob. Sir, 'twas my business in your courteous tongue
To put the arbitration. I have again
(Discover'd by my mother) reliev'd my poor uncle;
Whose anger now so great is multiplied,
I dare not venture in the eye of either,

Till your persuasions [shall] with fair excuse
Have made my satisfaction.

Bruin. Mother-o'-pearl! sir, 'tis a shrewd task;
Yet I'll do my best: your father hath so good news,
That I hope 'twill be a fair motive to't;
But womens' tongues are dangerous stumbling blocks
To lie in the way of peace. (*Enter* GEORGE.)
Now, George.

George. Master Foster's coming, sir.

Rob. I beseech you, sir, let not me see him,
Till you have confer'd with him.

Bruin. Well, well! (*To George.*) Ere your return to Master Foster, call my daughter forth of the garden. [*Exit George.*
And how does your uncle, Master Foster?

Rob. Sir, so well,
I'd be loath to anticipate the fame,
That shortly will o'erspread the city,
Of his good fortunes.

Bruin. Why, I commend thee still;
He wants no good from thee, no not in report:
'Tis well done, sir, and you show duty in't.

Enter JANE.

Now, daughter, where are your lusty suitors?

Jane. I was glad of my release, sir. *Suitors* call you 'em? I'd keep dish-water continually boiling, but I'd seeth such suitors: I have had much ado to keep 'em from bloodshed: I have seen, for all the world, a couple of cowardly curs quarrel in that fashion; as the one turns his head, the other snaps behind; and as he turns,

his mouth recoils again: but I thank my pains for't, I have leagu'd with 'em for a week without any further intercourse.

Bruin. Well, daughter, well; say a third trouble come; say in the person of young Master Foster here came a third suitor: how then?

Jane. Three's the woman's total arithmetic: indeed I would learn to number no farther, if there was a good account made of that.

Rob. I can instruct you so far, sweet beauty.

Jane. Take heed, sir; I have had ill handsell to-day; perhaps 'tis not the fortunate season; you were best adjourn your journey to some happier time.

Rob. There shall no augurism fright my plain dealing: sweet, I fear no hours.

Jane. You'll not betray me with love-powder.

Rob. Nor with gunpowder neither, i'faith; yet I'll make you yield if I can.

Bruin. Go, get you together; your father will be coming; leave me with your suit to him, ply this yourself: and, Jane, use him kindly, he shall be his father's heir, I can tell you.

Jane. Never the more for that, father; if I use him kindly, it shall be for something I like in himself, and not for any good he borrows of his father. But come, sir, will you walk into the garden? for that's the field I have best fortune to overcome my suitors in.

Rob. I fear not that fate neither; but if I walk into your garden, I shall be tasting your sweets.

Jane. Taste sweetly and welcome, sir; for there grows *honesty*, I can tell you.

Rob. I shall be plucking at your *honesty*.

Jane. By *my honesty* but you shall not, sir: I'll hold you a handful of *pennyroyal* of that; i'faith, if you touch my *honesty* there, I'll make you eat *sorrel* to your supper, though I eat *sullenwood** myself: no, sir, gather first *time* and *sage*, and such wholesome herbs, and *honesty* and *heart's-ease* will ripen the whilst.

Rob. You have fair roses, have you not?

Jane. Yes, sir, roses; but no gilliflowers †.

Bruin. Go, go, and rest on Venus' violets: Shew her a dozen of bachelor's buttons, boy.

[*Exit Rob. and Jane.*

* I suppose the *artemisia* or *southern* wood is meant.

† "But no *gilliflowers*." Jane has been too successful in her play on the names and qualities of the flowers to have chosen this at random; and I am inclined to think the following extract from the "Winter's Tale" will serve to illucidate her meaning:

"—— the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations and *streak'd gilliflowers*,
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren; *and I care not*
To get slips of them.
Pol. Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?
Per. For I have heard it said,
There is *an art*, which, *in their piedness*, shares
With great creating nature."

"This art," says Stevens, in a note on that passage, "is pretended to be taught at the end of some of the old books that treat of cookery." As I understand the passage, then, Jane means to say, *I have such good qualities and beauty as nature has given, but none that are produced by art.*" If the passage be thus understood, the opposition of *the rose* and the *gilliflower* is complete. If the reader is not satisfied with this conjecture, I will further suggest that *gill-flirt* was then a well-known term for a wanton; and Stevens has informed us that *gilly'vors* (the vulgar way of calling gilliflowers) is still in use in Sussex to denote *a harlot*. Jane has spoken more than once of her *honesty*, and here may be the allusion.

Here comes his father. (*Enter* OLD MASTER FOSTER *and his* WIFE.) Now, my kind partner, have we good news?

Old Fost. Sir, in a word, take it: your full lading and venture is return'd at sixty fold increase.

Bruin. Heaven take the glory! a wondrous blessing;
Oh, keep us strong against these flowing tides!
Man is too weak to bound himself below,
When such high waves do mount him.

Old Fost. Oh, sir, care and ambition seldom meet;
Let us be thrifty; titles will faster come
Than we shall wish to have them.

Bruin. Faith, I desire none.

Old Fost. Why, sir, if so you please, I'll ease your cares;
Shall I, like a full adventurer, now bid you
A certain ready sum for your half traffic.

Bruin. Ay, and I'd make you gainer by it too;
For then would I lay by my trouble, and begin
A work which I have promis'd unto heaven;
A house, a *Domus Dei* shall be rais'd,
Which shall to doomsday be established
For succour to the poor; for in all ages
There must be such.

Old Fost. Shall I bid your venture at a venture?

Bruin. Pray you do, sir.

Old Fost. Twenty thousand pounds.

Bruin. Nay, then you underrate your own value much: will you make it thirty?

Old Fost. Shall I meet you half way?

Bruin. I meet you there, sir; for five-and-twenty thousand pounds the full venture's yours.

Old Fost If you like my payment, 'tis the one half in ready cash, the other seal'd for six months.

Bruin. 'Tis merchant-like and fair. George, you observe this? Let the contents be drawn.

George. They shall, sir.

Old Fost. Your hazard is now all past, sir.

Bruin. I rejoice at it, sir, and shall not grudge your gains,
Though multiplied to thousands.

Old Fost. Believe me, sir, I account myself a large gainer by you.

Bruin. Much good may it be to you, sir: but one thing,
At this advantage of my love to you,
Let me entreat.

Old Fost. What is it, sir?

Bruin. Faith, my old suit, to reconcile those breaches
'Twixt your kind son and you: let not the love
He shows unto his uncle be any more a bar
To sunder your blessings and his duty.

Old Fost. I would you had enjoin'd me some great labour
For your own love's sake: but to that my vow
Stands fix'd against; I'm deaf, obdurate
To either of them.

M. Fost. Nay, sir, if you knew all
You would not waste your words in so vain expence:
Since his last reformation, he has flown
Out again, and in my sight relieved
His uncle in the dicing-house;

For which, either he shall be no father to him,
Or no husband to me.

Bruin. Well, sir, go call my daughter forth of the garden, and bid her bring her friend along with her; troth, sir, I must not leave you thus; I must needs make him your son again.

Old Fost. Sir, I have no such thing a-kin to me.

Enter ROBERT *and* JANE; *Robert kneels to his Father.*

Bruin. Look you, sir, know you this duty?

Old Fost. Not I, sir; he's a stranger to me. Save your knee, I have no blessing for you.

M. Fost. Go, go to your uncle, sir; you know where to find him; he's at his old haunt; he wants more money by this time; but I think the conduit-pipe is stopp'd from whence it ran.

Old Fost. Did he not say, he'd beg for you? you'd best make use of's bounty.

Bruin. Nay, good sir.

Old Fost. Sir, if your daughter cast any eye of favour upon this unthrift, restrain't, he's a beggar: Mistress Jane, take heed what you do.

M. Fost. Ay, ay, be wise, Mistress Jane; do not you trust to spleen and time worn to pity, you'll not find it so; therefore, good gentlewoman, take heed.

Bruin. Nay, then, you are too impenetrable.

Old Fost. Sir, your money shall be ready, and your bills; other business I have none.
(To Rob.) For thee, beg, hang, die like a slave;
Such blessings ever thou from me shalt have.

[*Exit Foster and his Wife.*

Bruin. Well, sir, I'll follow you. *(To Rob.)*
And, sir, be comforted,
I will not leave till I find some remorse;
Meantime let not want trouble you;
You shall not know it.

Rob. Sir, 'tis not want I fear, but want of blessing
My knee was bent for; for mine uncle's state,
Which now I dare say outweighs my father's far,
Confirms my hopes as rich, as with my father's,
His love excepted only.

Bruin. Thy uncle's state! how, for heaven's love?

Rob. By his late marriage to the wealthiest widow
That London had; who has not only made him
Lord of herself, but of her whole estate.

Bruin. Mother-o'-pearl! I rejoice in't: this news
Is yet but young?

Rob. Fame will soon speak it loud, sir.

Bruin. This may help happily to make all peace:
But how have you parley'd with my daughter, sir?

Jane. Very well, father; we spake something, but did nothing at all: I requested him to pull me a Catherine pear, and had I not look'd to him he would have mistook and given me a popperrin: and to requite his kindness, I pluck'd him a rose, and had almost prick'd my finger for my pains.

Bruin. Well said, wag; are there sparks kindled?
Quench 'em not for me: 'tis not a father's roughness,
Nor doubtful hazard of an uncle's kindness
Can me deter. I must to your father;
Where (as a chief affair) I'll once more move,
And (if I can) return him back to love. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DOCTOR *and* STEPHEN'S WIFE.

Wife. Sir, you see I have made a speedy choice,
And as swift a marriage: be it as it will,
I like the man; if his qualities afflict me,
I shall be happy in't.

Doct. I must not distaste what I have help'd to make;
'Tis I that join'd you.

Wife. A good bargain, I hope.

Enter CLOWN.

Roger, where's your master?

Clown. The good man of the house is within, forsooth.

Wife. Not your *master*, sir?

Clown. 'Tis hard of digestion. Yes, my *master* is within: he masters you, therefore I must be content. You have long'd for crosses a good while, and now you are like to be farther off them than e'er you were; for I'm afraid your good husband will leave you ne'er a cross i' th' house to bless you with.

Wife. Well, sir, I shall be bless'd in't. But where is he?

Clown. Where he has mistaken the place a little, being his wedding-day; he is in *nomine*, when he should be in *re*.

Wife. And where's that?

Clown. In your counting-house: if he were a kind husband, he would have been in another counting-house by this time: he's tumbling over

all his money-bags yonder; you shall hear of him in the bowling-alley again.

Wife. Why, sir, all is his, and at his dispose;
Who shall dare to thwart him?

Enter STEPHEN *with Bills and Bonds.*

Clown. Look where he comes.

Wife. How now, sweetheart? what hast thou there?

Steph. I find much debts belonging to you, sweet;
And my care must be now to fetch them in.

Wife. Ha! ha! prithee do not mistake thyself,
Nor my true purpose; I did not wed to thrall,
Or bind thy large expense, but rather to add
A plenty to that liberty; I thought by this,
Thou wouldst have stuff'd thy pockets full of gold,
And thrown it at a hazard; made ducks and drakes,
And baited fishes with thy silver flies;
Lost, and fetch'd more: why, this had been my joy!
Perhaps at length thou wouldst have wast'd my store;
Why, this had been a blessing too good for me.

Steph. Content thee, sweet, those days are gone,
Ay, even from my memory;
I have forgot that e'er I had such follies,
And I'll not call 'em back: my cares* are bent
To keep your state, and give you all content.
Roger, go, call your fellow-servants up to me,
And to my chamber bring all books of debt;
I will o'erlook, and cast up all accounts,

* The quarto reads, "*eares.*"

That I may know the weight of all my cares,
And once a year give up my stewardship.

Clown. (Aside to the Wife.) Now you may see what hasty matching is: you had thought to have been vex'd, and now you cannot; you have married a husband, that (sir reverence of the title) now being my master-in-law, I do think he'll prove the miserablest, covetous rascal, that ever beat beggar from his gate. But 'tis no matter; time was when you were fairly offered, if you would have took it; you might have had other matches, i'faith, if it had pleas'd you; and those that would have *cross'd* you: I would have sold away all that ever you had had; have kept two or three whores at livery under your nose; have turn'd you out in your smock, and have us'd you like a woman: whereas now, if you'd hang yourself, you can have none of these blessings: but 'tis well enough, now you must take what follows.

Wife. I'm new to seek for crosses, the hopes I meant
Turn to despair, and smother in content.

Enter ROBERT.

Steph. Oh, nephew, are you come! the welcom'st wish
That my heart has; this is my kinsman, sweet.

Wife. Let him be largely texted in your love,
That all the city may read it fairly:
You cannot remember me, and him forget;
We were alike to you in poverty.

Steph. I should have begg'd that bounty of your love,

Though you had scanted me to have given't him;
For we are one, I an uncle nephew,
He a nephew uncle. But, my sweet self,
My slow request you have anticipated
With proffer'd kindness; and I thank you for it.
But how, kind cousin, does your father use you?
Is your name found again within his books?
Can he read son there?

Rob. 'Tis now blotted quite:
For by the violent instigation
Of my cruel stepmother, his vows and oaths
Are stamp'd against me, ne'er to acknowledge me,
Never to call, or bless me as a child;
But in his brow, his bounty and behaviour
I read it all most plainly.

Steph. Cousin, grieve not at it; that father lost at home,
You shall find here; and with the loss of his inheritance,
You meet another amply proffer'd you;
Be my adopted son, no more my kinsman:
(To his Wife.) So that this borrowed bounty do not stray
From your consent.

Wife. Call it not borrowed, sir; 'tis all your own;
Here 'fore this reverend man I make it known,
Thou art our child as free by adoption,
As deriv'd from us by conception,
Birth, and propinquity; inheritor
To our full substance.

Rob. You were born to bless us both;
My knee shall practise a son's duty
Even beneath [a] son's; giving you all
The comely dues of parents; yet not

Forgetting my duty to my father:
Where'er I meet him he shall have my knee,
Although his blessing ne'er return to me.

Steph. Come then, my dearest son, I'll now give thee
A taste of my love to thee: be thou my deputy,
The factor and disposer of my business;
Keep my accounts, and order my affairs;
They must be all your own: for you, dear sweet,
Be merry, take your pleasure at home, abroad;
Visit your neighbours; aught that may seem good
To your own will; down to the country ride;
For cares and troubles lay them all aside;
And I will take them up; it's fit that weight
Should now lie all on me: take thou the height
Of quiet and content, let nothing grieve thee;
I brought thee nothing else, and that I'll give thee.

[*Exit Stephen and Robert.*

Wife. Will the tide never turn? was ever woman
Thus burden'd with unhappy happiness?
Did I from riot take him, to waste my goods,
And he strives to augment it? I did mistake him.

Doct. Spoil not a good text with a false comment;
All these are blessings, and from heaven sent;
It is your husband's good, he's now transform'd
To a better shade, the prodigal's return'd.
Come, come, know joy, make not abundance scant;
You 'plain of that which thousand women want.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BRUIN *and* OLD FOSTER; GEORGE *and* RICHARD *follow them, carrying several Bags of Money across the Stage.*

Bruin. So, so, haste home, good lads, and return for the rest.
Would they were cover'd, George; 'tis too public
Blazon of my estate; but 'tis no matter now;
I'll bring it abroad again ere it be long.
Sir, I acknowledge receipt of my full half debt,
Twelve thousand five hundred pounds; it now remains
You seal those writings as assurance for the rest,
And I am satisfied for this time.

Old Fost. Pray stay, sir, I have bethought me: let me once
Throw dice at all, and either be a complete
Merchant, or wrack my estate for ever:
Hear me, sir; I have of wares, that are now vendible,
So much as will defray your utmost penny;
Will you accept of them, and save this charge
Of wax and parchment?

Bruin. Be they vendible, sir, I am your chapman:
What are they, Master Foster?

Old Fost. Broad cloths, kerseys, cochineal, such as will not stay two days upon your hands.

Bruin. I find your purpose; you'd have your warehouses empty for the receipt of your full fraught: I'll be your furtherer, make so your rates that I may be no loser.

Enter GEORGE *and* RICHARD.

Old Fost. I have no other end, sir; let our Factors peruse and deal for both.

Bruin. Mine is return'd. George, here's a new business; you and Richard must deal for some commodities betwixt us, if you find 'em even gain, or but little loss, take carriage presently and carry 'em home.

George. I shall.

Old Fost. Richard, have you any further news yet from our shipping?

Rich. Not yet, sir; but by account from the last, when they put from Dover, this tide should bring them into Saint Catharine's pool; the wind has been friendly.

Old Fost. Listen their arrival, and bid the gunner speak it
In his loud thunder all the city over;
Tingle the merchants' ears at the report
Of my abundant wealth. Now go with George.

Rich. I shall do both, sir. [*Exeunt Factors.*

Old Fost. I must plainly now confess, Master Alderman,
I shall gain much by you. The half of your ship
Defrays my full cost.

Bruin. Beshrew me if I grudge it, being myself
A sufficient gainer by my venture, sir.

Enter MISTRESS FOSTER.

M. Fost. Still flows the tide of my unhappiness;
The stars shoot mischief; and every hour
Is critical to me.

Old Fost. How now, woman?
Wreck'd in the haven of felicity? What ail'st thou?

M. Fost. I think the devil's mine enemy.

Old Fost. I hope so too; his hate is better than his friendship.

M. Fost. Your brother—your good brother, sir——

Old Fost. What of him? he's in Ludgate again.

M. Fost. No, he's in *Highgate;* he struts it bravely,
An alderman's pace at least.

Old Fost. Why, these are oracles, doubtful enigmas!

M. Fost. Why, I'm sure you have heard the news;
He's married, forsooth.

Old Fost. How, married? no woman of repute would choose so slightly.

M. Fost. A woman, in whose breast, I had thought, had liv'd
The very quintessence of discretion: and who is't,
Think you? nay, you cannot guess, though I should give
You a day to riddle it: 'tis my gossip, man,
The rich widow of Cornhill.

Old Fost. Fie, fie, 'tis fabulous.

M. Fost. Are you my husband? then is she his wife.
How will this upstart beggar shoulder up,
And take the wall of you? his new-found pride
Will know no eldership.

Old Fost. But, wife, my wealth will five times double his

Ere this tide ebb again: I wonder I hear not
The brazen cannon proclaim the arrival
Of my infinite substance.

M. Fost. But beggars will be proud of little, and shoulder at the best.

Old Fost. Let him first pay his old score, and then reckon:
But that she——

M. Fost. Ay, that's it mads me too.
Would any woman, 'less to spite herself,
So much profane the sacred name of wedlock:
A dove to couple with a stork, or a lamb a viper?

Old Fost. Content thee; forgive her; she'll do so no more;
She was a rich widow, a wife he'll make her poor.

Bruin. So, sir, you have clos'd it well; if so ill it prove,
Leave it to proof, and wish not misery.

Enter STEPHEN *and* ROBERT.

Unto your enemy. Look, here he comes.

Old Fost. You say true, 'tis my enemy indeed.

Steph. Save you, Master Alderman, I have some business with you.

Bruin. With me, sir? and most welcome; I rejoice to see you.

M. Fost. Do you observe, sir, he will not know you now?
Jockey's a gentleman now.

Old Fost. Well fare rich widows, when such beggars flourish;
But ill shall they fare that flourish o'er such beggars.

Steph. Ha! ha! ha!

M. Fost. He laughs at you.

Old Fost. No wonder, woman, he would do
that in Ludgate;
But 'twas when his kind nephew did relieve him:
I shall hear him cry there again shortly.
Steph. Oysters, new Walfleet oysters!
Old Fost. The gentleman is merry.
M. Fost. No, no, no; he does this to spite me;
as who should say,
I had been a fish-wife in my younger days.
Bruin. Fie, fie, gentlemen, this is not well;
My ears are guilty to hear such discords.
[*Robert kneels to his father.*
Look, Master Foster; turn your eye that way;
There's duty unregarded, while envy struts
In too much state: believe me, gentlemen,
I know not which to chide first.
Old Fost. What idol kneels that heretic to?
Steph. Rise, boy; thou art now my son, and
owest no knee
To that unnatural: I charge you rise.
Old Fost. Do, sir, or turn your adoration that
way;
You were kind to him in his tatter'd state;
Let him requite it now.
M. Fost. Do, do, we have pay'd for't aforehand.
Rob. I would I were divided in two halves,
So that might reconcile your harsh division.
Steph. Proud sir, this son which you have
alienated
For my love's sake, shall, by my love's bounty,
Ride side by side in the best equipage
Your scorns dare pattern him.
Old Fost. Ay, ay, a beggar's gallop up and down.
M. Fost. Ay, 'tis up now, the next step down.

Steph. Ha, ha! I laugh at your envy, sir. My business
Is to you.

Bruin. Good sir, speak of any thing but this.

Steph. Sir, I am furnishing some shipping forth,
And want some English traffic, broad-cloths, kerseys,
Or such like; my voyage is to the Straits:
If you can supply me, sir, I'll be your chapman.

Bruin. That I shall soon resolve you, sir.

Enter FACTORS.

Come hither, George.

Old Fost. This is the rich merchantman;

M. Fost. That's neither grave nor wise;

Old Fost. Who will kill a man at Tiburn shortly.

M. Fost. By carts that may arise *;
Or if the hangman die, he may have his office.

Bruin. Then you have bargain'd, George?

George. And the ware carried home, sir; you must look
To be little gainer; but lose you cannot.

Bruin. 'Tis all I desire from thence. Sir, I can furnish you
With wares I lately from your brother bought:
Please you go see them, for I would fain divide you,
Since I can win no nearer friendship.

Steph. I'll go with you, sir.

[*Exeunt Bruin, Stephen, and George.*

Old Fost. Take your adoption with you, sir.

Rob. I crave but your blessing with me, sir.

* These four lines seem to be a quotation, probably from some old ballad.

Old Fost. 'Tis my curse then; get thee out of mine eye:
Thou art a beam in't, and I'll tear it out
Ere it offend to look on thee*.

M. Fost. Go, go, sir; follow your uncle-father,
Help him to spend what thrift has got together;
It will be charity in you to spend,
Because your charity it was to lend.

Rob. My charity! you can a virtue name,
And teach the use, yet never knew the same.
[*Exit.*

Enter RICHARD.

Old Fost. See, wife, here comes Richard; now listen,
And hear me crown'd the wealthiest London merchant.
Why dost thou look so sadly?

M. Fost. Why dost not speak? hast lost thy tongue?

Rich. I never could speak worse.

Old Fost. Why, thy voice is good enough.

Rich. But the worst accent, sir, that ever you heard;
I speak a screech owl's note. Oh, you have made
The most unhappiest bargain that ever merchant did!

Old Fost. Ha? what can so baleful be, as thou wouldst seem
To make by this sad prologue? I am no traitor
To confiscate my goods: speak, whate'er it be.

* Here is an evident allusion to two passages in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

Rich. I would you could conceit it, that I might not speak it.

Old Fost. Dally not with torments, sink me at once.

Rich. Now you've spoke it half; 'tis *sinking* I must treat of:
Your ships are all sunk.

Old Fost. Hah!

M. Fost. Oh, thou fatal raven! let me pull thine eyes out
For this sad croak. [*Flies at Richard.*

Old Fost. Hold, woman! hold, prithee! 'tis none of his fault.

M. Fost. No, no, 'tis thine, thou wretch; and therefore
Let me turn my vengeance all on thee; thou
Hast made hot haste to empty all my warehouses,
And made room for that the sea hath drunk before thee.

Old Fost. Undone for ever! Where could this mischief fall?
Were not my ships in their full pride at Dover;
And what English Charybdis has the devil digg'd
To swallow nearer home.

Rich. Even in the mouth and entrance of the Thames
They were all cast away.

Old Fost. Dam up thy mouth
From any further michievous relation.

Rich. Some men were sav'd, but not one pennyworth of goods.

Old Fost. Even now thy baleful utterance was choak'd,
And now it runs too fast; thou fatal bird, no more.

M. Fost. May serpents breed, and fill this fatal stream,
And poison her for ever.

Old Fost. Oh, curse not, they come too fast!

M. Fost. Let me curse somewhere, wretch, or else I'll throw
Them all on thee; 'tis thou, ungodly slave,
That art the mark unto the wrath of heaven:
I thriv'd ere I knew thee.

Old Fost. I prithee split me too.

M. Fost. I would I could! I would I had never seen thee;
For I ne'er saw hour of comfort since I knew thee.

Old Fost. Undone for ever! my credit I have crack'd
To buy a venture, which the sea has soak'd;
What worse can woe report?

M. Fost. Yes, worse than all,
Thy enemies will laugh, and scorn thy fall.

Old Fost. Be it the worst then: that place I did assign
My unthrifty brother, Ludgate, must now be mine.
Break, and take Ludgate.

M. Fost. Take Newgate rather.

Old Fost. I scorn'd my child, now he may scorn his father.

M. Fost. Scorn him still!

Old Fost. I will: would he my wants relieve,
I'd scorn to take what he would yield to give.
My heart be still my friend, although no other;
I'll scorn the help of either son or brother.
My portion's begging now: seldom before,
In one sad hour, was man so rich and poor.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. Scene I.

Enter Mistress Jane, Godfrey Speedwell, *and* Master Lambskin.

Jane. Gentlemen, my father's not within; please you to walk a turn or two in the garden, he'll not be long.

Lamb. Your father, Mistress Jane? I hope you have observation in you, and know our humours; we come not a wooing to your father.

Speed. Experience must bear with folly; thou art all innocent, and thy name is Lambskin; grave sapience guides me, and I care not a pin for thy squibs and thy crackers; my old dry wood shall make a lusty bonfire, when thy green chips shall lie hissing in the chimney-corner. Remember, mistress, I can make you a lady by mine own experience.

Lamb. Prithee do not stand troubling the gentlewoman with thy musty sentences, but let her love be laid down betwixt us like a pair of cudgels, and into whose hands she thrusts the weapons first, let him take up the bucklers*.

Speed. A match between us.

Jane. Must I be stickler then?

* "*Let him take up the bucklers,*" *i. e.* let him be declared victor. The expression is not uncommon in our old dramatic writers. See notes on Act V. of "Much Ado About Nothing."

Lamb. We are both to run at the ring of your setting up, and you must tell us who deserves most favour.

Jane. But will you stand both at my disposing?

Lamb. Else let me never stand but in a pillory.

Jane. You love me, both you say?

Speed. By this hand!

Lamb. Hand? Zounds! by the four-and-twenty elements.

Jane. Pray spare your oaths; I do believe you do,
You would not else make all this stir to woo.
Sir Godfrey, you are a knight both tough and old;
A rotten building cannot long time hold.

Lamb. Speed! well, live well, die well, and be hang'd well, change your copy well, your experience will not carry it else.

Jane. You're rich too, at least yourself so say;
What though? you're but a gilded man of clay.

Lamb. A man of gingerbread; i'faith, I could find in my heart to eat him.

Jane. Should I wed you, the fire with frost must marry,
January and May; I for a younger tarry.

Lamb. That's I! in troth I'll be thy young Lambskin; thou shalt find me as innocent as a sucking dove: speak, sweet mistress, am I the youth in a basket?

Jane. You are the sweet youth, sir, whose pretty eyes
Would make me love; but you must first be wise.

Speed. Ah! hah! is your coxcomb cut? I see

experience must board this fair pinnace. A word in private.

Lamb. I'll have no words in private, unless I hear too.

Enter MASTER BRUIN, STEPHEN *and* ROBERT.

Bruin. Come, gentlemen, we'll make few words about it:
Merchants in bargaining, must not, like soldiers
Lying at a siege, stay months, weeks, days, but strike
At the first parley:
Broad-cloths, and wools, and other rich commodities,
Lately from your brother brought, are all your own.

Steph. 'Tis well.

Bruin. Then be not angry, gentle sir,
If now a string be touch'd, which hath too long
Sounded so harshly over all the city;
I now would wind it to a musical height.

Steph. Good master alderman, I think that string
Will still offend mine ear; you mean the jarring
'Twixt me and my brother?

Bruin. In troth, the same.

Steph. I hate no poison like that brother's name.

Bruin. Oh, fie! not so.

Steph. Uncivil churl, when all his sails were up,
And that his proud heart danc'd on golden waves——

Bruin. As heaven be thank'd it still does!

Steph. Yet, sir, then,
I being sunk, and drown'd in mine own misery,

He would not cast out a poor line of thread
And bring me to the shore; I had been dead
And might have starv'd for him.

Bruin. A better fate, sir,
Stood at your elbow.

Steph. True, sir: this was he
That lifted me from want and misery;
Whose cruel father, for that [act of] good,
Cast him away, scorning his name and blood;
Lopp'd from his side this branch that held me dear;
For which he's now my son, my joy, my heir.
But for his father, hang him!

Bruin. Fie! fie!

Steph. By heaven!

Bruin. Come, come, live in more charity, he is your brother;
If that name offend, I'll sing that tune no more.
Yonder's my daughter busy with her suitors;
We'll visit them. Now, Jane, bid your friends welcome.

Jane. They must be welcome, sir, that come with you;
To thee ten thousand welcomes still are due.

Rob. My sweet mistress! [*Kisses her.*

Lamb. Zounds! Sir knight, we have stood beating the bush, and the bird's flown away; this city bowler has kiss'd the mistress* at first cast.

Bruin. How fare ye, gentlemen? what cheer, Sir Knight?

* "*Hath kiss'd the mistress.*" This phrase is, I believe, still common among bowlers, with the exception that *the mistress* is now called *the jack.*

Speed. An adventurer still, sir, to this new found land.

Lamb. He sails about the point, sir, but he cannot put in yet.

Bruin. The wind may turn, sir. *(To Steph.)* A word, Master Foster. [*They converse apart.*

Lamb. You see, Sir Speedwell, what card is turn'd up for trump; I hold my life this spruce citizen will forestall the market: oh, these brisk factors are notable firkers.

Speed. I doubt, sir, he will play the merchant with us.

Bruin. They both are suitors, sir, yet both shoot wide;
My daughter sure must be your kinsman's bride.

Steph. I'll give her a wedding ring on that condition,
And put a stone in't worth a thousand pound, sir.

Bruin. You have my hand and heart to't, be she pleas'd so.

Lamb. S'foot! let's show ourselves gallants, or gallymawfreys*: shall we be out-brav'd by a cockney? *(To Robert.)* A word, my fair Xenocrates; do you see, sir, here be those that have gone a fishing, and can give you a gudgeon?

Rob. You were best go fish for better manners, or I shall bob for eels with you.

[*Strikes him.*

Lamb. Zounds! are you a striker? Draw, sir knight.

* This word seems used here with no very definite meaning. Pistol, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," (Act II. Scene I.) applies it to Mrs. Ford:

"He loves thy gally-mawfrey: Ford, perpend."

Bruin. Not in my house; I pray be quiet, gentlemen.

Rob. He dares not do't abroad, believe me, sir.

Steph. Now by my life, my boy, for this brave spirit
I'll hug thee in mine arms: lose life and limbs
Ere thou forsake thy love.

Lamb. He's no rival here, sir; has struck me, And we are gentlemen.

Speed. And hear ye, sir; let him seek out his equals; for some of us are in danger to make her a lady shortly: I know what I speak; what I speak, I'll do; yet I'll do nothing but what comes from grave experience.

Steph. Speak what you please, sir; he's a gentleman
As good as either of you both; and shall
In list of love, for such a bed-fellow,
Brave him that dares; and here lay down more gold
To win her love, than both your states are worth.

Speed. Ha! do you know us, sir? you grow too bold; my experience now hath found you: you were once a tatter'd fellow, your name is Foster; have you such gold to give?

Lamb. Yes, yes, 'has won it betting at the bowling-alleys, or at the pigeon-holes in the garden-alleys.

Steph. You are muddy grooms to upbraid me with that scorn,
Which virtue now gilds over. Pray ye, gentlemen,
May I request your names?

Lamb. Our names are in the herald's books, I warrant you;

My name is Innocent Lambskin; and this knight,
Simply though he stands here, is known to be
Sir Godfrey Speedwell.

Steph. Well may he speed, sir. Lambskin and Speedwell; Ha! Is't so? I think I shall give you a medicine to purge this itch of love, sir.

Lamb. No itch neither, sir; we have no scabs here,
But yourself and your cousin.

Steph. Very good, sir! my little Lambskin, I have you
Here in sheep's skin; *(produces a parchment)*, look you; 'tis so, i'faith.
See, master alderman, these two crack'd gallants
Are in several bonds to my predecessor
For a debt of full two thousand a piece.
Cousin, fetch me a sergeant straight.

Rob. Yes, sir,

Speed. Oh, let him, I have a protection, sir.

Steph. I'll try that, sir.

Speed. A sergeant? nay, then,
Experience must work: Legs be strong and bold:
When sergeants wait at feasts, the cheer's but cold.
I'll shift for one. [*Exit.*

Lamb. Knight, knight! S'foot! if an errand knight run away, I were an errand ass to tarry, and be catch'd in the lime-bush: I love the wench well; but if they have no hole to place me in, but the hole in the counter, I'll be gone and leave 'em; that's flat. [*Exit.*

Brain. You have scar'd the suitors from the mark, sir.

Steph. I am glad on't, sir; they are but such as seek

To build their rotten state on you, and with your wealth
To underprop their weakness:
Believe me, reverend sir, I had much rather
You'd venture that my cos might call you father.

Bruin. We'll talk of that anon. See, sir, here comes you wife,

Enter STEPHEN'S WIFE.

The theme of all her time, with goodness mix'd,
The happy woman that was never vex'd.
You're welcome, Mistress Foster.

Wife. I thank you, sir.

Steph. Wife, your two debtors were here but now,
Speedwell and Lambskin.
A wolf could not have torn poor Lambskin worse
Than the bare name of sergeant: the very thought
Made them both take to their heels and run away.

Wife. 'Las, they are poor and lean, and being so,
Kill them not till they are fatter.

Steph. At thy girdle, sweet, hang the keys,
To lock the prison doors or let them loose:
'Twas my intent only (in way of mirth)
To rid them from the presence of Mistress Jane,
That our adopted son might have no bar
Unto his love.

Wife. The match is fair; and were that knot once tied,
I'd send some angels to attend the bride.

Enter GEORGE.

Steph. Sir, here's your factor.

Bruin. Are the wares ready.

George. Yes, and deliver'd, sir, to Master Foster's servants, who conveyed them in carts to the Custom House, there to be shipp'd; but going with them, sir, I met ill news.

Bruin. Ill news? what is't?

George. Old Master Foster's ships so richly laden,
By strange misfortune, sir, are cast away.

Bruin. Now heaven forbid!

Rob. Oh, me!

Steph. How? cast away? where?

Bruin. 'Tis impossible; they rid at Dover safe,
When he outbought my full share in the fraught,
And paid me down near thirty thousand pounds
In wares and money.

George. Which, had he not done, you had lost your venture.
By master Foster's own appointment, sir, they weighed
Their anchors up, and so to come for London;
But by a merciless storm they all were swallowed,
Even in the Thames' mouth: yet the men were sav'd,
But all the goods were lost.

Rob. Oh, my poor father! this loss will break his back.

Steph. Ha! what is that to you? if in my favour
You'll sit warm, then bury all *love* to him,
Nay, *duty;* hear you, sir! What! shed'st thou tears
For him that had no care to see thy heart
Drop blood? He was unnatural, and heaven
Hath justly now rewarded him.

Bruin. 'Tis a most strange fate!
He needs would buy my part at any rate;
And now all's lost.

Steph. Greedy desire he swallowed,
And now is swallowed: 'tis but his hire;
And I'll not pity it, no more than he,
In his abundance, did my misery.

Wife. I grieve for my poor gossip, his good wife,
She never met good fortune all her life,
And this will break her heart-strings:
In good sooth, I'll go and comfort her.

Steph. In good sooth you shall not;
Nor him, nor her, at this time, gentle wife;
He scorn'd me in his height, now being poor,
If that he needs my help, he knows my door.
Sir, we'll for this time leave you; at fitter leisure
We'll have this marriage talk'd of.

Bruin. At your own good pleasure.

Steph. Come, wife. Go not to see your father, sir,
I charge you.

Bruin. Jane, bring you friends to the door.

Rob. (Aside.) I'll help my father, though myself grow poor. [*Exeunt.*

Bruin. Where's my factor?

George. Here, sir.

Bruin. What, are the square stones, and timber,
Brought as I appointed?

George. Yes, sir, and the workmen that daily ply the work, are in number fourscore at least.

Bruin. My vows flew up to heaven, that I would make
Some pious work in the brass book of fame,
That might till domesday lengthen out my name.
Near Norton Falgate therefore have I bought
Ground to erect this house, which I will call
And dedicate, Saint Mary's Hospital;
And when 'tis finish'd, o'er the gates shall stand

In capital letters, these words fairly graven,
For I have given the work and house to heaven,
And call'd it, *Domus Dei*, God's house;
For in my zealous faith I know full well,
Where good deeds are, there heaven itself doth dwell. [*Exit.*

Enter OLD FOSTER, RICHARD *his Factor, and the Keeper of Ludgate.*

Rich. Good sir, resolve not thus; return again,
Your debts are not so great that you should yield
Your body thus to prison unconstrain'd.
Old Fost. I will not trust the iron hearts of men;
My credit's lost, my wealth the sea has swallowed,
Wrack'd at my door, even in the mouth o' th' Thames;
Oh, my misfortune! never man like me
Was so thrown down and cast to misery.
Rich. Dear sir, be patient!
Old Fost. I prithee get thee gone,
And with thy diligence assist thy mistress,
To keep that little left to help herself;
Whilst here in Ludgate I secure my body,
From writs, arrests, and executions,
Which (well I know) my cruel creditors
Will thunder on me. Go, get thee gone!
If what is left they'll take, do thou agree;
If not, I am resolved here to stay and die.
Rich. I'll do my best, sir, to procure your peace.
[*Exit.*
Old Fost. Do so. *(To the Keep.)* Come, sir,
I yield myself your prisoner:
You are the keeper of this Ludgate.
Keep. Yes, sir;
Your name is register'd amongst the prisoners.

Old Fost. So!
I have seen the fair outside of this tomb before;
This goodly apple has a rotten core.
Keep. As all prisons have, sir.
Old Fost. I prithee bar me of no privilege
Due to a free citizen: thou knowest me well?
Keep. Yes, Master Foster, and I sorrow for your losses,
Yet doubt not but your son and brother——
Old Fost. Oh, speak not of them! do not kiss and kill me;
I have no son nor brother that esteems me,
And I for ever hate their memory:
Prithee no more! I am come sick
Into a bad inn, and look for worse attendance:
I have taken a surfeit of misfortunes, and here
Must swallow pills, with poison to recure me:
I am sea-sick, sir, and heave my hands to heaven;
Ne'er to so low an ebb was Foster driven.
Keep. There be some fees to pay, sir, at your coming in.
Old Fost. So, so!
If this old walnut tree, after all this cudgelling,
Have but one cluster left, thou shalt have that too;
If not, take off these leaves that cover me,
Pull off these white locks! rend them from my head!
And let them in my woes be buried.
Keep. 'Las, sir, this house is poor.
Old Fost. I think no less,
For rich men seldom meet with such distress:
Well, well! what book must I read over now?
What servile oar must I be tied to here,
Slave-like to tug within this christian galley?

Keep. Sir, being the youngest prisoner in the house,
You must beg at the iron grate above,
As others do for your relief and theirs.

Old Fost. For a beggar to beg, sir, is no shame;
And for the iron grate, it bears an emblem
Of iron-hearted creditors, that force men lie
In loathsome prisons thus to starve and die.

Enter ROBERT.

Keep. Who would you speak with, sir?
Oh, cry you mercy! 'tis his son:
I'll leave them. [*Exit.*

Old Fost. O torment to my soul! what mak'st thou here?
Cannot the picture of my misery
Be drawn, and hung out to the eyes of men,
But thou must come to scorn and laugh at it?

Rob. Dear, sir,
I come to thrust my back under your load,
To make the burden lighter.

Old Fost. Hence from my sight, dissembling villain! go!
Thine uncle sends defiance to my woe,
And thou must bring it. Hence! thou basilisk,
That kill'st me with mine eyes. Nay, never kneel;
[*Robert kneels.*
These scornful mocks more than my woes I feel.

Rob. Alas, I mock ye not; but come in love,
And natural duty, sir, to beg your blessing;
And for mine uncle——

Old Fost. Him and thee I curse;

I'll starve, [or]* I eat bread from his purse,
Or from thy hand: Out, villain! tell that cur,
Thy barking uncle, that I lie not here
Upon my bed of riot, as he did,
Cover'd with all the villanies which man
Had ever woven; tell him I lie not so,
It was the hand of heaven struck me thus low,
And I do thank it. Get thee gone, I say,
Or I shall curse thee, strike thee; prithee away:
Or if thou'lt laugh thy fill at my poor state,
Then stay, and listen to the prison grate,
And hear thy father, an old wretched man,
That yesterday had thousands, beg and cry
To get a penny: Oh, my misery!

Rob. Dear sir, for pity hear me.

Old Fost. Upon my curse I charge no nearer come,
I'll be no father to so vile a son. [*Exit.*

Rob. Oh, my abortive fate!
Why for my good am I thus pay'd with hate?
From this sad place of Ludgate here I freed
An uncle, and I lost a father for it;
Now is my father here, whom if I succour,
I then must lose my uncle's love and favour.
My father once being rich, and uncle poor,
I him relieving was thrust forth of doors,
Baffled, revil'd, and disinherited:
Now mine own father here must beg for bread,
Mine uncle being rich; and yet, if I
Feed him, myself must beg. Oh, misery,
How bitter is thy taste! yet I will drink

* This corrects the measure and the sense; and the expression is found in the "Tempest" and "Macbeth" of Shakspeare, and in several parts of the Holy Scriptures.

Thy strongest poison: fret what mischief can,
I'll feed my father; though, like the pelican,
I peck mine own breast for him.

[*Old Foster appears above at the grate, a box hanging down.*

Old Fost. Bread, bread, one penny to buy a loaf of bread for the tender mercy.

Rob. O me my shame! I know that voice full well;
I'll help thy wants, although thou curse me still.

Old Fost. Bread, bread; some christian man send back
Your charity to a number of poor prisoners.
One penny for the tender mercy.

[*Robert puts in money.*

The hand of heaven reward you, gentle sir,
Never may you want, never feel misery;
Let blessings in unnumber'd measure grow,
And fall upon your head where'er you go.

Rob. O happy comfort! curses to the ground
First struck me, now with blessings I am crown'd.

Old Fost. Bread, bread, for the tender mercy; one penny for a loaf of bread.

Rob. I'll buy more blessings: take thou all my store,
I'll keep no coin, and see my father poor.

[*Puts in more money.*

Old Fost. Good angels guard you, sir; my prayers shall be,
That heaven may bless you for this charity.

Rob. If he knew me, sure he would not say so;
Yet I have comfort if by any means
I get a blessing from my father's hands.
How cheap are good prayers! a poor penny buys

That by which man up in a minute flies,
And mounts to heaven.

Enter STEPHEN.

Oh me! mine uncle sees me.

Steph. Now, sir, what make you here
So near the prison?

Rob. I was going, sir,
To buy meat for a poor bird I have,
That sits so sadly in the cage of late,
I think he'll die for sorrow.

Steph. So, sir; your pity will not quit your pains:
I fear me I shall find that bird to be
That churlish wretch your father, that has taken
Shelter here in Ludgate. Go to, sir! urge me not,
You had best; I have given you warning;
Fawn not upon him, nor come not near him,
If you'll have my love.

Rob. 'Las, sir! that lamb
Were most unnatural that should hate the dam.

Steph. Lamb me no lambs, sir!

Rob. Good uncle! alas!
You know when you lay here I succour'd you,
So let me now help him.

Steph. Yes, as he did me,
To laugh and triumph at my misery;
You freed me with his gold, but 'gainst his will:
For him I might have rotted, and lain still:
So shall he now.

Rob. Alack the day!

Steph. If him thou pity, 'tis thine own decay.

Old Fost. Bread, bread! some charitable man remember the poor prisoners: bread for the tender mercy; one penny!

Rob. Oh listen, uncle!
That's my poor father's voice.
Steph. There let him howl.
Get you gone, and come not near him.
Rob. Oh, my soul,
What tortures dost thou feel! Earth ne'er shall find
A son so true, yet forc'd to be unkind. [*Exit.*
Steph. Well! go thy ways, thou pattern of true virtue;
My heart is full: I could e'en weep,
And much ado I had to forbear.
To hear a brother begging in a jail,
That but ere while spread up a lofty sail
As proudly as the best. Oh, 'twere a sin
Unpardonable in me should I not succour him!
Yes, I will do't, yet closely it shall be done,
And he not know from whence his comforts come.
What ho! Keeper, there! a word I pray.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. What's your pleasure, sir?
Steph. What's he that at the grate there begg'd even now?
Keep. One Master Foster, sir, a decayed citizen new come in. Cry you mercy, sir, you know him better than myself, I think.
Steph. I should do, knew he me as I would know him.
Prithee take him from the grate; and that
No more he stand to beg, there is ten pound
To pay his score and take off all his wants:
If he demand who sends it, tell him 'tis
Thine own free hand to lend him money.
Keep. Well, sir, I shall.

Steph. Spend what he will, my purse shall pay it all;
And at his parting hence the poorest prisoner,
And all free citizens that live in Ludgate,
Shall bless his coming in: I'll for his sake
Do something now, that whilst this city stands,
Shall keep the Foster's name engraven so high,
As no black storm shall cloud their memory.

Keep. Heaven bless your purpose, sir! [*Exeunt.*

Enter STEPHEN'S WIFE, *and her Sister*, OLD FOSTER'S WIFE.

Wife. Sister, there's no way to make sorrow light
But in the noble bearing; be content.
Blows given from heaven are our due punishment:
All shipwrecks are no drownings: you see buildings
Made fairer from their ruins: he that I married,
The brother to your husband, lay, you know,
On the same bed of misery; yet now
He's rank'd with the best citizens.

M. Fost. Oh, you were born to wealth and happiness;
I, to want and scorn!

Wife. Come, I will work my husband: stay this grief.
The longest sorrow finds at last relief.

Enter CLOWN.

Now, sir, your business?

Clown. Marry, mistress, here are two creatures,
Scarce able to make one man desire to speak with you.

Wife. What are they? Know their names.

Clown. Nay, I know that already: the one is a thing that was pluck'd into the world by the head and shoulders to be wondered at, and 'tis call'd a knight; the other is a coach-horse of the same overridden race, and that's a foolish gentleman.

Wife. Oh, they are my old debtors, Speedwell and Lambskin:
Go, call them in: and, my gentle sister,
Comfort yourself and my imprison'd brother,
To whom commend me; give to him this gold;
What good I can I'll do for him, be bold.

M. Fost. May heavenly blessings guard you from all ill:
Never was woman vext as I am still. [*Exit.*

Enter SPEEDWELL *and* LAMBSKIN.

Wife. Now, good Sir Godfrey and Master Innocent.

Lamb. I put my innocent case into your hands, mistress, as a simple country client thrusts his money into a lawyer's, who stands upon no great terms to take it.

Speed. We come about the old business, the sickness of the purse, lady.

Clown. And they'd be lothe to keep their beds i' th' Counter, mistress; they are afraid of sergeants; Master Lambskin knows that mace* is a binder.

* I scarcely need observe that the Clown puns between the *sergeant's mace*, and *the spice* of that name. Poor as it is, it is common enough.

Lamb. No, truly it makes me loose, for I never smell it, though it be two streets off, but it gives me a stool presently.

Clown. Ay, you have been a loose liver always, 'tis time to look to you.

Speed. Fair lady, we are your debtors, and owe you money:
Experience tells us that our bonds are forfeit,
For which your husband threaten'd to arrest us;
My shoulders love no such clappings; I love tobacco;
But would be lothe to drink in Wood-street pipes*:
Some money we will pay ere we go hence:
I speak you see with grave experience.

Wife. I know it well, sir.

Lamb. Had not your husband (when he went about fowling
For the alderman's daughter) driven away the bird,
We might have bidden you to a better breakfast;
But now you must take what we can set before you.

Wife. I am content to do so: you shall find
Nor me nor my husband carry a griping mind.

Enter ROBERT.

Now, coz, where's your uncle?

Rob. He's hard at hand, I saw him coming
With the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.

Lamb. Zounds! knight, if the mayor come,
The shoulder-clappers are not far off.

Wife. Oh, fear not, I'll be your surety, sir.

Clown. Do you not smell Poultry ware, Sir Godfrey?

* One of the Counters was situated in Wood-street, Cheapside.

Speed. Most horribly; I'll not endure the scent on't.

Wife. Upon my trust none here shall do you wrong.
(To Rob.) What is his business with the aldermen?

Rob. About the entertainment of the King
That means to visit London.

Wife. Saw you your sad father?

Rob. I did; would I might never see man more
Since he so hates my sight! the prison door,
Which gapes for comers-in, that mouth of hell,
Shut me out with a churlish cold farewell:
After my father's most unnatural part
Was play'd on misery's stage, mine uncle comes
In thunder on me, threatening with black storms
To nail me to the earth, if I relieved
My poor old father.

Enter STEPHEN.

Clown. Here's my master now, gentlemen.

Steph. Oh, gentlemen, you're both welcome;
Have you paid this money on your bonds yet?

Wife. Not yet, sir; but here they come like honest gentlemen
To take some order for it: good sweetheart,
Shall it be put to me?

Steph. Do as you please;
In all thy deeds thou'rt govern'd with good stars;
Therefore if thou cry'st peace, I'll not raise wars.
E'en order it how thou wilt.

Wife. I thank ye, sir: then tell me, gentlemen,
What present money can you pay?

Speed. Two hundred pound we can lay down.

Lamb. And take up seven times as much if

we knew where to get it; but there's our lamentable case: Mistress, if you strip us any nearer, you'll strip the skin and all, I'll assure you.

Wife. We'll shear no sheep so close.

Lamb. No sheep, forsooth, but a poor innocent Lambskin.

Clown. You should be a calf by your white face.

Wife. All your two thousand pound, gentlemen, we quit
For your two hundred: go, pay the money to my coz,
And receive your two bonds cancel'd.
(To Steph.) Say, sir, are ye content?

Steph. Wife, I must stand to the arbitrament.
Go, cousin, receive their money: *(to Clown)*, and, sirrah,
Make them drink.

Clown. I'll make them drink if they will. Come, gallants, empty your bags, and I'll bumbast your bellies: this lean gentlemen looks as if he had no lining in's guts; I could take him by the leg and hurl him into the dog-house.

[*Exeunt Rob. Speed. Lamb. and Clown.*

Steph. How now, sweet wife, what art thou musing on?

Wife. I must come a wooing to you, sir.

Steph. A wooing, sweet, for what?

Wife. For your brother: oh, 'tis unmeet
For souls fram'd by one square to grow uneven;
'Tis like a war 'mongst the great lights of heaven;
One cannot lose his beauty, but the other
Suffers eclipse; so brother against brother.

Steph. Wouldst have me kiss him that would kill me?

Wife. Would you kill a man lying at your feet?
Do good for ill.

Steph. Thy songs are angels' tunes,
And on thy wings I'll fly with thee to heaven.
Thou speakest as I would have thee;
His debts I have justly weighed, and find them light.

Wife. The easier then ta'en off.

Steph. Thou sayest most right:
But I of purpose keep aloof to try
My kinsman; whom I spied most dolefully
Hovering about the grate, where his father cry'd
With piteous voice, for bread; yet did I chide
And rail'd against the boy; but my heart says
(Howe'er my tongue) it was drown'd in tears,
To see such goodness in a son.

Wife. Such wheels in children's bosoms seldom run.

Steph. I'll lay a wager, wife, that this two hundred pounds,
Paid by these foolish fellows, will, by the boy,
Be given his father.

Wife. Troth, would it might!

Steph. In doing me such wrong he does me right.
Ludgate was once my dwelling, and to show
That I true feeling of his misery know,
Albeit long since blown o'er; so thou'lt consent,
Within that place I'll raise some monument,
Shall keep our names alive till domesday.

Wife. I gladly shall agree
To any act that tends to charity.

Enter MASTER BRUIN.

Bruin. Come, where's Mr. Foster? Oh, you lose time, sir,
Not meeting fortune that comes to kiss you.
The Lord Mayor and Aldermen stay at the Guildhall
Expecting you, as well to set down order,
Touching the entertainment of the King,
As to elect you for the following year
A sheriff of London.

Steph. Their loves outstrip my merit:
Yet since they lay that load on me, I'll bear it,
And wait in scarlet on my liege and king.
But pray resolve me, Master Alderman,
Why makes the King this visitation?

Bruin. Troth, sir, to honour me, I thank his highness,
Who with my Lord the Cardinal comes along
To see the dedication of my house,
Built for the weary travellers to rest in;
Where stands three hundred beds for their relief,
With meat, drink, and some money when they part;
Which I'll give freely with a willing heart.

Steph. A pious, worthy, and religious act.
Come, sir, to th' Guildhall: Wife, look to your kinsman;
Watch him near; but do not hinder him
If he relieve his father. Come, Master Alderman:
With such sweet incense up your offerings fly,
I'll build one altar more to charity. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. Scene 1.

Ludgate—Enter Old Foster, *his* Wife, *and* Keeper.

Keep. Come, come, be merry, sir; do as mourners do at funerals, wear your hat in your eyes, and laugh in your heart.

Old Fost. I have no such fat legacy left me,
To teach me how to play the hypocrite.

Keep. No? Why, look ye, sir, you shall want neither meat, drink, money, nor any thing that the house affords; or if any thing abroad like ye, sir, here's money, send for what you will, sir: nay, you shall beg no more at the grate neither.

Old Fost. Ha! Is not this Ludgate?

Keep. Yes, sir.

Old Fost. A jail, a prison, a tomb of men lock'd up,
Alive and buried?

Keep. 'Tis what you please to call it.

Old Fost. Oh, at what crevice then hath comfort,
Like a sun-beam, crept in? for all the doors
And windows are of iron, and barr'd to keep
Her out: I had a limb cut from my body
Dear to me as life; I had a son and brother too;
Oh, grief!

They both would give me poison first in gold,
Before their hollow palms ten drops should hold
Of nature's drink, cold water, but to save
My life one minute: whence should pity come
When my best friends do beat it from this room.

Keep. No matter, sir; since you have good meat set before you, never ask who sent it; if heaven provide for you, and make the fowls of the air your caters, feed you fat, and be thankful, and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

M. Fost. The keeper is your friend, and pours true balm
Into your smarting wounds; therefore, dear husband,
Endure the dressing with patience.

Old Fost. Oh, wife, my losses are as numberless
As the sea's sands that swallowed them! and shall I,
In reckoning them, my sad griefs multiply?

M. Fost. You may, sir;
But your dim eyes so thick with tears do run,
You cannot see from whence your comforts come:
Besides, your debts being truly counted
Cannot be great.

Old Fost. But all my wealth and state lies in the sea's bottom.

M. Fost. It again may rise.

Old Fost. Oh, never!

M. Fost. Good sir, so hope, for I from heaven espy
An arm to pluck you from this misery.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Sir, there's one without desires to speak with you.

Old Fost. Go, send him in; *(Exit Keep.)* none comes to do me good,
My wealth is lost, now let them take my blood.

Enter ROBERT.

Ha! what art thou? Call for the Keeper there,
And thrust him out of doors, or lock me up.

M. Fost. Oh, 'tis your son, sir.

Old Fost. I know him not: [*Rob. kneels.*
I am no king, unless of scorn and woe;
Why kneel'st thou then? why dost thou mock me so?

Rob. Oh! my dear father, hither am I come,
Not like a threat'ning storm to increase your wrack,
For I would take all sorrows from your back,
To lay them all on my own.

Old Fost. Rise, mischief, rise! away! and get thee gone!

Rob. Oh, if I be thus hateful to your eye
I will depart, and wish I soon may die;
Yet let your blessing, sir, but fall on me.

Old Fost. My heart still hates thee.

M. Fost. Sweet husband!

Old Fost. Get you both gone!
That misery takes some rest that dwells alone;
Away! thou villain.

Rob. Heaven can tell,
Ake but your finger, I (to make it well)
Would cut my hand off.

Old Fost. Hang thee, hang thee!

M. Fost. Husband!

Old Fost. Destruction meet thee! turn the key there, ho!

Rob. Good sir, I'm gone, I will not stay to grieve you.

Oh, knew you, for your woes what pains I feel,
You would not scorn me so. See, sir, to cool
Your heat of burning sorrow, I have got
Two hundred pounds, and glad it is my lot
To lay it down, with reverence, at your feet;
No comfort in the world to me is sweet,
Whilst thus you live in moan.

Old Fost. Stay!

Rob. Good troth, sir, I'll have none on't back,
Could but one penny of it save my life.

M. Fost. Yet stay and hear him: Oh, unnatural strife,
In a hard father's bosom.

Old Fost. I see mine error now. Oh! can there grow
A rose upon a bramble? did there e'er flow
Poison and health together in one tide?
I'm born a man; reason may step aside,
And lead a father's love out of the way:
Forgive me, my good boy, I went astray:
Look, on my knees I beg it; not for joy
Thou bring'st this golden rubbish, which I spurn;
But glad in this, the heaven's mine eye-balls turn,
And fix them right to look upon that face,
Where love remains with pity, duty, grace.
Oh, my dear wronged boy!

Rob. Gladness o'erwhelms my heart!
With joy I cannot speak!

M. Fost. Crosses of this foolish world,
Did never grieve my heart with torments more
Than it is now grown light,
With joy and comfort of this happy sight.

Old Fost. Yet, wife, I disinherited this boy.

Rob. Your blessing's all I crave.

Old Fost. And that enjoy.
For ever, evermore, my blessings fly
To pay thy virtues, love and charity.

Enter STEPHEN'S WIFE.

M. Fost. Here comes your brother's wife.
Welcome, dear sister.
Wife. I thank you. How fare you, brother?
Old Fost. Better than your husband's hate could wish me,
That laughs to see my back with sorrows bow:
But I am rid of half my ague now.
Wife. Had you an ague then?
Old Fost. Yes, and my heart had every hour a fit;
But now 't has left me well, and I left it.
Wife. Oh, 'tis well. Cousin, what make you here, I pray?
Rob. To support a weak house falling to decay.
Wife. 'Tis well if you can do't, and that the timber
You underprop it with be all your own.
Hark, coz, where's your uncle's money?
Rob. Faith, aunt, 'tis gone;
But not at dice, nor drabbing.
Wife. Sir, I believe,
With your uncle's gold your father you relieve.
Rob. You are sav'd believing so, your belief's true.
Wife. You cut large thongs of that's another's due,
And you will answer 't ill. *(Aside.)* Now, in good troth,

I laugh at this jest; much good do them both:
My wager I had won, had I but lay'd.
Old Fost. What has my poor boy done, that you have made
So much blood rise in's cheeks?
Wife. Nothing, dear brother;
Indeed all's well; the course that he has run
I like and love; let him hold on the same;
A son's love to a father none can blame:
I will not leave your brother's iron heart
Till I have beat it soft with my entreats.
Old Fost. 'Twill ne'er be music 'tis so full of frets.
Wife. Frets make best music: strings the higher rack'd
Sound sweetest.
Old Fost. And sound nothing when they are crack'd,
As is his love to me, and mine to him.
Wife. I hope you both in smoother streams shall swim.
He's now the Sheriff of London, and in council
Set at the Guildhall in his scarlet gown,
With mayor and aldermen, how to receive the king,
Who comes to see Master Brun's hospital
To-morrow consecrated by th' Cardinal,
And old Saint Mary's Spittle, here by Shoreditch.
M. Fost. Ay, sister, he and you may sit
'Bout what you will; heav'n I'm sure prospers it;
But I am ever cross'd: you have been bound
For three great voyages, yet ne'er run aground:
Maid, wife, and widow, and wife again; have spread
Full and fair sails, no wrecks you e'er did dread,

Nor e'er felt any; but e'en close ashore,
I'm sunk, and midst of all my wealth made poor.

Wife. You must thank heaven.

M. Fost. I do, indeed, for all.

Wife. Sister, that hand can raise that gives the fall.

Enter KEEPER.

Keep. Master Foster, the new sheriff, your brother,
Is come to Ludgate, and I am come in haste
To know your pleasure, if you would see him.

Old Fost. I'll see a fury first; hence! clap too the door, I pray thee.

Wife. Why, 'tis your brother, sir.

Rob. Father, let's fly the thunder of his rage.

Wife. Stand valiantly,
And let me bear the storm: all hurts that are,
And ruins in your bosoms, I'll repair.

Enter STEPHEN FOSTER.

Steph. Where's the Keeper? Go, sir, take my officers
And see your prisoners presently convey'd
From Ludgate, unto Newgate, and the Counters.

Keep. I shall, sir.

Steph. Let the constables of the wards
Assist you. Go, dispatch! and take these with you.
(To Rob.) How now! what mak'st thou here, thou caitiff? Ha!
Com'st thou to stitch his wounds that seeks to cut
My throat? dar'st thou in despite
Relieve this dotard?

Old Fost. Get thee from my sight,
Thou devil in red: com'st thou in scarlet pride
To tread on thy poor brother in a jail?
Is there but one small conduit-pipe that runs
Cold water to my comfort, and wouldst thou
Cut off that, thou cruel man?

Steph. Yes;
I'll stop that pipe that thou mayst pining sit;
When drops but fell on me, thou poison'd it:
Thou thrust'st a son's name from thy cruel breast,
For clothing of his uncle; now that uncle
Shall thrust him naked forth for clothing thee;
Banish'd for ever from my wealth and me.

Old Fost. Thou canst not be to nature so uneven,
To punish that which has a pay from heaven;
Pity I mean, and duty: *(Steph. offers to strike Rob.)* Wouldst thou strike?
Wound me then, that will kill thee if I can:
Thou'rt no brother, and I'll be no man.

Steph. Thou ravest.

Old Fost. How can I choose? thou makest me mad:
For shame thou shouldst not make these white hairs sad;
Churl, beat not my poor boy; let him not lose
Thy love for my sake; I had rather bruise
My soul with torments for a thousand years,
(Could I but live them), rather than salt tears
Thy malice draw from him: see, here's thy gold;
Tell it, none's stole; my woes can ne'er be told!

Rob. Oh, misery! is nature quite forgot?

Old Fost. Choke me with thy dunghill muck, and vex me not.

Steph. No, keep it; he perhaps that money stole

To give it thee; for which (to vex thy soul)
I'll turn him forth of doors: make him thy heir,
Of jails, miseries, curses, and despair,
For here I disinherit him of all.

Old Fost. No matter, lands to him in heaven will fall.

Wife. Good husband.

M. Fost. Gentle brother.

Rob. Dear uncle.

Steph. I am deaf.

Old Fost. And damn'd; the devil's thumbs stop thine ears.

Steph. I'll make thee wash those curses off with tears.

Keeper, away with him out of my sight;
And do, sir, as I charg'd you.

Keep. Yes, sir, I will.

Old Fost. Poor tyranny! when lions weak lambs kill.

[*Exeunt all but Steph. and his Wife.*

Steph. How now, wife, art vext yet?

Wife. Never so well content, believe me, sir;
Your mildness wears this mask of cruelty well.

Steph. I'm glad they're gone; mine eyes with rain did swell,
And much ado they had from pouring down.
The Keeper knows my mind:—Wife, I have paid
My brother's debts; and when he's out of door,
To march to Newgate, he shall be set free.

Wife. Oh, let me kiss thee for this charity.
But for your cousin, sir?

Steph. He's my life's best health:
The boy shall not miscarry for more wealth
Than London gates lock safe up every night;

My breath in black clouds flies, my thoughts are white.

Wife. Why from Ludgate do you remove prisoners?

Steph. This is my meaning, wife:
I'll take the prison down and build it new,
With leads to walk on, rooms large and fair;
For when myself lay there, the noisome air
Chok'd up my spirits; and none better know
What prisoners feel, than they that taste the woe.
The workmen are appointed for the business;
I will have 't dispatch'd before 'tis thought on.

Wife. In good deeds I will walk hand in hand with you;
There is a fair tenement adjoining
Close to the gate, that was my father's,
I'll give it freely; take it down, and add
So much ground to the work.

Steph. * 'Tis fairly given;
Thy soul on prisoners' prayers shall mount to heaven.
The plumbers and the workmen have survey'd
The ground from Paddington; whence I'll have laid
Pipes [all along] to London, to convey
Sweet water into Ludgate from fresh springs:
When charity tunes the pipe, the poor man sings.

Enter KEEPER.

How now, Keeper?

* This speech is not appropriated in the original, although divided from the Wife's: neither are the words between brackets altogether an insertion of my own. The speech appears thus in the original:

'Tis fairly given.
Thy soul on prisoners prayers shall mount to heaven:

Keep. The prisoners are remov'd, sir.

Steph. What did you with my brother?

Keep. As you commanded, sir, I have discharged him.

Steph. How did he meet that unexpected kindness?

Keep. Troth, sir, as a man o'ercome 'twixt grief and gladness;
But turning to his son, he fetch'd a sigh
So violent as if his heart would break,
And silent, wept, having no power to speak.

Wife. Alas! good old man, some sweet bird must sing,
And give his sorrows present comforting.

Steph. Not yet, I'll wrack his sorrows to the height,
And of themselves they'll then sink softly down.
Keeper, go thou again after my brother,
Charge in my name him and his son to appear

The plummers and the workmen have survey'd the ground
From Paddington; from whence I'l have laid pipes
Long to London to convey sweet water into Ludgate;
From fresh springs: when charity tunes the, pipe the
Poor man sings. *Enter Keeper.*
How now Keeper.

As I had occasion to give a note here, I thought one sample of the original might gratify the reader's curiosity, and he *has a miniature of the whole work*. The poet, who is here very minute in the description of Stephen's charity, is justified by the inscription on the wall quoted by Stow. On this subject, however, Strype observes, "The water *I find not to be altogether his gift*; for that I perused lately a book, wherein I found a memorandum, that Sir Robert Knowles [Lord Mayor in 1400] gave maintenance for the supply of the prisoners of *Ludgate* and Newgate for ever." Appendix, p. 26. There can be little doubt, however, that this excellent man did something for the benefit of the prisoners, in regard to the supplying them with water.

Before the King; to whom I will make known
Their wrongs against me, shewing just cause
To disinherit both by course of law. Begone!
Keep. I am gone, sir. [*Exit.*
Steph. Come, wife.
Wife. What's your meaning, sir?
Steph. Thou shalt know that anon.
The heavens oft scowl, clouds thicken, winds blow high,
Yet the brightest sun clears all, and so will I.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter HENRY III. *attended by* MOUNTFORD, PEMBROKE, *and* ARUNDEL, LORD MAYOR, STEPHEN FOSTER *as Sheriff*, ALDERMAN BRUIN, *&c.*

King. Oh! welcome is all love; our people's shouts
In their heart's language, makes our benvenues
Most high and sovereign: we return all thanks
Unto our loving citizens; *(to Bruin.)* chiefly to you, sir,
Whose pious work invites our majesty
To royallize this place with our best presence,
Accompanied with this reverend Cardinal:
Would we might, after [so] many broils,
End our days in these religious toils:
We would work most faithfully. But, bounteous sir,
How do you call your buildings?
Bruin. Unless it please your majesty to change it,
I call it *Domus Dei.*
King. The house of God;
It is too good to change: pray you proceed.
Bruin. These are my ends: to all distressed christians,

Whose travails this way bend, the hospital
Shall free succour be for three days and three nights
Sojourn; for diet, and lodging, both sweet and satisfying:
And (if there needs be such) as much in coin
As shall, for three days more, defray their further travail:
This unto heaven: be your testator, good my liege:
And witness with me, noble gentlemen,
Most free and faithfully I dedicate.

King. An honourable work, and deserves large memory.

Mount. 'Tis a good example, 'tis pity 'tis no better followed.

Arun. But say, sir, now in some future age,
(Perhaps some two or three hundred year behind us),
This place, intended for a use so charitable,
Should be unhallow'd again by villanous inhabitants,
Say whores instead of christians, and
Your hospital tenements turn'd into stews,
Would not this grieve you in your grave *?

Bruin. If my grave were capable of grief, sure it would, sir.

* I suspect Arundel to have been of Cranmer's school, and to have *prophesied* of *what had actually happened.* The following extract from a pamphlet of that time called, "Thieves falling out true Men come by their Goods," justifies the supposition: "And *Shoreditch* will complain to Dame Ann a Clear, *if we of the sisterhood, should not uphold her jollity.*" It is not through the *inattention* of the Editor that this, and the preceding speech of Bruin's, *halt so lamentably:* he has, in fact, exercised his utmost skill; but, as with many other passages in this drama, his success has not equalled his exertion.

King. Prithee be a false prophet.

Arun. I will if I can, my lord.

King. Let now our heralds in the streets proclaim
The title, and office of this hospital;
Make known to all distressed travellers,
That we'll accept his charitable house;
This *Domus Dei* shall be their free sojourn,
As is proposed.

Enter on the one Side STEPHEN'S WIFE; *on the other* OLD FOSTER, MRS. FOSTER, JANE, ROBERT, *and* KEEPER. *All kneel.*

King. What are these petitioners?

Rob. Each hath a knee for duty, the other for petition.

King. Rise, your duty's done; your petitions
Shall need no knees, so your intents be honest:
Does none here know them?

Steph. Yes, my good lord, there's now a wonder in your sight.

King. A wonder, Master Sheriff? you mean for beauty?

Steph. No, my liege, I would not so boast mine own wife;
But 'tis a wonder that excels beauty.

King. A wonder in a woman! What is't, I prithee?

Steph. Patience, my liege; this is a woman that
Was never vext.

King. You may boast it largely; 'tis a subject's happiness
Above a queen's. Have you suits to us?

Rob. I am the suppliant plaintiff, royal Henry;
From me their griefs take their original.
King. What art thou?
Rob. Even what your grace shall please to make of me:
I was the son of this distressed father,
Until he took his paternity off,
And threw me from his love; then I became
Son to mine uncle by adoption;
Who likewise that hath ta'en away again,
And thrown me back to poverty: never was son
So tost betwixt two fathers, yet knows not one;
For still the richest does despise his heir,
And I am back expuls'd into despair.
King. This may your vices cause.
Rob. For that I come
To your impartial censure for a doom.
King. We hear; speak on:
We know the parties; each one relate his grief,
And if it lie in us we'll yield relief:
'Tis first requisite that we know of you, sir,
The cause of this your son's disinheritance.
Old Fost. Before I understood his virtuous mind,
Or weighed his disposition to be kind,
I did that froward work; this now great man,
Was an unthrifty wretch, a prodigal then,
And I disdain'd to know his brotherhood,
Denied relief to him; this child, kind and good,
Against my contradiction, did him relieve,
As his distressed uncle; at this
I chid, forbad: still he holds on his course,
He grows more kind, and he in wasting worse;
My rage continued as it had begun,
And in that rage I threw away my son.

Steph. The like plead I, my lord: for when my state
Had rais'd itself by an uncertain fate,
I took this outcast child, made him my own,
As full and free as I myself had sown
The seed that brought him forth; for this my love,
His oblig'd duty presently did prove
A traitor to my trust, against my will,
Succouring that foe which I did love so ill,
Only for hating him: my charity being thus
Abus'd, and quit with injury, what could I then
But as his father erst, so I again
Might throw him from my love? for worse is love abus'd
Than new-born hate, and should be so refus'd:
I did a father's part, if it were bad,
Blame him for both, there I my pattern had.

King. You fall betwixt two pillars, sir; is't not so?

Rob. Unhappy fate, my lord; yet thus I plead:
For this my father's hate I might deserve,
I broke his precepts, and did unchildly swerve
From his commission; I to my uncle gave
What was my father's, striving thereby to save
His fall'n repute; he rag'd, I did it still,
Yet must confess as it was well, 'twas ill;
Well in my love, methought, ill to my fate,
For I thereby ruin'd my own estate:
But that mine uncle throws me forth of door,
For the same cause he took me in before,
Beats sorest 'gainst my bosom; if 'twere good
To take from a father for an uncle's food,
In laws of love and nature, how much rather
Might I abridge an uncle for a father?

Charity's a virtue generally stands,
And should dispersed be through all mens' hands.
Then would you keep't alone? for when your heir
I first adopted was, charity was there:
How errs your judgment then? seeing you see
What was good in you, makes sin in me;
You'll say my father did it: oh, throw away
That foul excuse; let not discretion stray
So far aside; if custom lawful make,
Then sin were lawful for example sake;
Nor were those wasted goods only your own,
Since part was mine having adoption;
Then do me right, my lord, yet do no wrong,
For where my duty fail'd my love was strong.

King. With an impartial ear we have heard
Your loving story, 'tis both fair and honest.

Steph. Oh, let me now anticipate your grace,
And, casting off the shadow of a face,
Show my heart's true figure; how have I striv'd
To make this forced counterfeit long-liv'd,
And now it bursts: come [both] into my heart,
I have two jewels here shall never part
From my love's eye-watch; two worthy to be fil'd
On time's best record, a woman and a child.
(To Old Fost.) Now, sir, to you I come; we must be friends,
Though envy wills not so, yet love contends
'Gainst envy and her forces; my young years
Say I must offer first, a peace in tears.

Old Fost. Oh, let my shame my bosom's centre break!
Love is so young it coys, but cannot speak.

King. You bless mine eyes with objects that become
The theatre of kings to look upon.

Steph. The keeper is discharg'd, sir; your debts are paid,
And from the prison you're a free man made:
There's not a creditor can ask you ought:
As your son did for me, so have I bought
Your liberty with mine; and to increase it more,
Because I know bare liberty is poor
Without assistance: to raise your state again,
The thirds of mine are yours, say you amen.

Wife. No, not to that, you are kind brothers now,
Divide by halves that love, and I'll allow.

Steph. Thou art only wise in virtue, as thou set'st down
So let it be; half my estate's your own.

Old Fost. It whole redounds again, for I am yours;
Forget this minute my forgetful hours.

Steph. Oh, they are buried all, sir.

King. This union's good;
Such league should ever be in brotherhood.

Steph. Yet, without boast, my liege, let me relate
One small thing more, remorse of my own state,
And my dear brother's worse succession:
For that we both have prisoners been in one
Self-same place of woe, and felt those throes
That Ludgate yields; my charity bestows
Some alms of comfort: Keeper, you can speak it.

Keep. And many hundred more, sir: you have re-edified
And built it fair, adding more ground to it,
And by pipes of lead from Paddington, drawn
Water thither free for all prisoners, lodgings

Likewise free, and a hundred pounds yearly, to make
Them fires for better comfort: all this is almost finish'd.

King. A worthy work! the better being done
In the founder's eye, not left unto succession.

Steph. Oh, my good lord, I ever kept in mind
An English sentence, which my tutor is,
And teaches me to act my charity
With mine own hands, so doubtful is performance
When the benefactor's dead.

King. What is't, I prithee?

Steph. This, my good lord:
Women are forgetful, children unkind,
Executors covetous, and take what they find:
If any man ask where the dead's goods became,
The executor swears he died a poor man.

King. You have prevented well, so has this good alderman;
I wish you many scholars.

Wife. (To Steph.) You make some doubts of me in this, sir:
Did you not say that women are forgetful?

King. You have vex'd her now, sir: how do you answer that?

Steph. No, my lord, she's exempt from the proverb.

Wife. No, my lord, I'll help it better: I do confess
That women are forgetful, yet ne'ertheless
I am exempt; I know my fate, and find
My dear husband must not leave me behind,

But I must go before him *; and 'tis said,
The grave's good rest when women go first to bed.

Steph. Thanks for thy excuse, good wife; but not thy love
To fill my grave before me, I would not live to see that day.

Wife. Prithee no more, I had rather be angry than flatter'd.

King. You have a wonder, Master Sheriff; a prizeless jewel.

Steph. Many jewels, my good lord; a brother, wife, and child,
For this I would have strove even with a father:
Howe'er rough storms did in my brows appear,
Within my bosom it was always clear.

Old Fost. I give him to you now, sir.

Steph. I take him, and to him back do give
All that myself behind in state shall leave.

Old Fost. And all that you gave me, I do bestow;
So in one hour become full heir to two.

Bruin. I claim a third by this bond's virtue;
[*Pointing to Jane.*
See as a father thou art heir to those.

Jane. I will not go to him, father, on any of these conditions.

Rob. You shall have love to boot too, sweet Jane.

Jane. Nay, an you play booty, I dare not trust you.

Rob. What shall I say? Accept my hand and heart †,
Ty'd in a true love's knot, never to pat.

* This lady proved a false propheteſs.

† The quarto reads, "What shall I say, *except* my hand and heart;" and Stephen may mean, What shall I offer except, &c. but it seems a forced construction.

Jane. Ay, marry, sir, these are better conditions than the inheritance of three fathers; let me have love in *esse*, let lands follow in *posse:* now I'll have thee as fast as the priest can dispatch us, let him read as fast as he can.

King. The liveliest harmony that e'er I heard!
All instruments compar'd to these sweet tunes
Are dull and harsh: I joy to see so good a child,
A woman wonder, brothers reconciled.
(To Bruin.) You, worthy sir, did invite us to a feast,
We'll not forget it, but will be your guests;
Because we'll view these wonders o'er again,
Whose records do deserve a brazen pen;
But this above the rest, in golden text,
Shall be insculp'd, *A woman never vext.*

FINIS.

APPIUS AND VIRGINIA:

A

TRAGEDY.

BY

JOHN WEBSTER.

JOHN WEBSTER.

All that we learn from the Biog. Dram. relating to this author is, that he was a clerk of St. Andrew's Holborn, and a member of the Merchant Tailors' Company. To this I would willingly have added something, and conceived that the registers of that parish would, in all probability, furnish me with the time of his decease: for that purpose they were searched for fifteen years, from 1624, when he wrote the "City Pageants," but without affording the slightest trace of him*. The reader must therefore, I fear, be content with this account, brief and insufficient as it is. The following lines, relating to him, have been before quoted:

"But h'st with him crabbed (Websterio),
The play-wright, cart-wright: whether? either ho——
No further. Looke as yee'd bee lookt into:
Sit as ye woo'd be read: Lord! who woo'd know him?
Was ever man so mangl'd with a Poem?
See how he drawes his mouth awry of late,
How he scrubs: wrings his wrests: scratches his pate;
A midwife! help? By his *braines coitus*
Some centaure strange: some huge Bucephalus,
Or Pallas (sure) ingendred in his braine,
Strike Vulcan with thy hammer once againe.
This is the critick that (of all the rest)
I'de not have view me, yet I fear him least,
Heer's not a word cursively I have writt,
But hee'll industriously examine it;
And in some 12 monthes hence (or there about)
Set in a shamefull sheete my errors out.

* The clerkship is in the gift of the rector; the *vestry* register, therefore, could afford no direct evidence of the appointment of Webster's successor: I examined them notwithstanding for some years, from 1624, when they commence; and the following entry, *of the 15th June*, 1629, shows for certain that he no longer held the office, of which he had been most probably deprived by death: "It is agreed that Mr. Smith, *the clerke of this parish*, shall have a lease," &c. &c. I may be permitted here to acknowledge the polite attentions received from Mr. Berridge, to whose care these registers are entrusted.

But what care I? it will be so obscure,
That none shall understand him (I am sure.")*.

His character for good humour, as a critic, is here not placed in a very amiable point of view; and the passage, "in some 12 months hence," seems to allude to the labour with which he wrote; a charge, if it be such, that was not for the first time preferred against him in this work, as in the Preface to "Vittoria Corombona," published in 1612, he himself adverts to it: "To those, who report I was a long time in finishing this tragedy, I confess I do not write with a goose-quill wing'd with two feathers." As to his illiberality, it must be remembered that in the same preface he bears honourable testimony to the great abilities of many of his contemporaries. Theobald has the following review of his ability in the Preface to the 'Fatal Secret,' a tragedy, altered from the 'Dutchess of Malfy.' "He had a strong and impetuous genius, but withal a most wild and indigested one: he sometimes conceived nobly, but did not always express with clearness; and, if he now and then soars handsomely, he as often rises into the regions of bombast: his conceptions were so eccentric that we are not to wonder why we cannot trace him. As for rules, he either knew them not, or thought them too servile a restraint. Hence it is, that he skips over years and kingdoms with an equal liberty. (It must be confessed, the unities were very sparingly observed at the time in which he wrote; however, when any poet travels so fast, that the imagination of his spectators cannot keep pace with him, probability is put quite out of breath)."

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF HIS DRAMATIC WORKS:

1. The White Devil; or, the Tragedy of P. Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano; with the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona, the famous Venetian Courtezan, 4to. 1612; 4to. 1631; 4to. 1665; 4to. 1672; 8vo. 1810.

* Notes from Black-Fryers, printed in certain Elegies. Done by sundrie excellent wits. With Satyrs and Epigrams. 1620.

2. The Devil's Law-Case; or, When Women go to Law, the Devil is full of Business. Trag. Com. 4to. 1623.

3. The Dutchess of Malfy. T. 4to. 1623; 4to. 1640; 4to. 1678; 4to. 1708; 8vo. 1810.

4. Appius and Virginia. T. 4to. 1654; 4to. 1655.

It was altered by Betterton, and brought out in 1679, unto the title of "The Roman Virgin; or, Unjust Judge."

5. A Cure for a Cuckold, C. 4to. 1661.

He wrote also, in conjunction with Rowley,

The Thracian Wonder, a comical History, 4to, 1661.

With Dekker,

Wyat's History, 4to. 1607.

With Forde in

A late Murther of the Sonn upon the Mother, N. P.

And with some others in unpublished plays.

He wrote also the Induction to "The Male Content," by Marston.

"A monumental Column, erected to the living Memory of the ever-glorious Henry, late Prince of Wales," 4to. 1613. And

"The Monument of Honour, at the Confirmation of the Right Worthy Brother John Goare, in the High Office of his Majesty's Lieutenant over his Royal Chamber, at the charge and expence of the Right Worthy and Worshipful Fraternity of eminent Merchant Tailors." 4to. 1624.

It is perhaps needless to state, that the subject of the present play is taken from the Roman History, when the government was vested in ten persons, of whom Appius Claudius was the first, for the purpose of digesting their laws into proper form. This was about four hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. Appius appears to have been appointed to this office in three successive years; in the last of which he and his colleagues were deposed, on account of that atrocious action which forms the subject of the present drama. The story (which Webster, on the whole, has followed very exactly) is to be found in the Third Book of Livy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Virginius, an old centurion, father to Virginia.
Appius Claudius, one of the Decemviri.
Minutius, general in chief.
Spurius Oppius, one of the Decemviri.
Marcus Claudius, a sycophant to Appius.
Numitorius, brother to Virginius.
Icilius, betrothed to Virginia.
Valerius.
Horatio.
Sertorius, servant to Icilius.
Two cousins of Appius's.
An Advocate.
A Roman officer.
Senators.
Corbulo, the clown, servant to Virginia.

Virginia.
Julia.
Calphurnia.
Nurse, servant to Virginia.

Lictors, Soldiers, Servants, &c.

APPIUS AND VIRGINIA.

ACT I. Scene I.

Enter Minutius, Oppius, *and* Lictors.

Min. Is Appius sent for, that we may acquaint him
With the decree o' th' Senate?

Lict. He is, my lord,
And will attend your lordships presently.

Opp. Lictor, did you tell him that our business
Was from the Senate?

Lict. I did, my lord; and here he is at hand.

Enter Appius, *his* Two Cousins, *and* Claudius.

App. My lords, your pleasure?

Min. Appius, the Senate greet you well,
And by us do signify unto you,
That they have chosen you one of the Decemviri.

App. My lords, far be it from the thoughts of so poor a plebeian, as your unworthy servant Appius, to soar so high: the dignity of so eminent a place would require a person of the best parts and blood in Rome. My lords, he that must steer at th' head of an empire, ought to be the mirror of the times, for wisdom and for policy; and therefore I would beseech the Senate to

elect one worthy of the place, and not to think of one so unfit as Appius*.

Min. My lord, my lord, you dally with your wits.
I have seen children oft eat sweetmeats thus,
As fearful to devour them:
You are wise, and play the modest courtier right,
To make so many bits of your delight.

Opp. But you must know, what we have once concluded
Cannot, for any private man's affection,
Be slighted. Take your choice then with best judgment
Of these two proffers; either to accept
The place propos'd you, or be banished Rome
Immediately. Lictors make way. We expect
Your speedy resolution.

[*Exeunt Oppius, Minutius, and Lictors.*

1 *Cous.* Noble cousin,
You wrong yourself extremely to refuse
So eminent a place.

2 *Cous.* It is a means
To raise your kindred. Who shall dare t' oppose
Himself against our family, when yonder
[*Pointing to the chair of state.*
Shall sit your power and frown?

App. Or banish'd Rome!
I pray forbear a little. Marcus.

Claud. Sir.

* This play is generally in metre, and, comparatively, not incorrectly printed: I have notwithstanding reduced this speech to prose; the affected humility of the speaker is not unsuited to it; added to which, it was impossible to retain the division in the quarto, and difficult to improve it.

App. (Aside to him.) How dost thou like my cunning?

Claud. I protest
I was be-agued, fearing lest the Senate
Should have accepted of your feign'd refusal.
See how your kindred and your friends are muster'd
To warm them at your sun-shine. Were you now
In prison, or arraign'd before the Senate
For some suspect of treason, all these swallows
Would fly your stormy winter; not one sing;
Their music's [in] the summer and the spring.

App. Thou observest shrewdly. Well, I'll fit them for't.
I must be one of the Decemviri,
Or banish'd Rome? banish'd! laugh, my trusty Marcus;
I am enforc'd to my ambition.
I have heard of cunning footmen that have worn
Shoes made of lead some ten days 'fore a race,
To give them nimble and more active feet:
So great men should, that aspire eminent place,
Load themselves with excuse and feign'd denial,
That they with more speed may perform the trial.
Mark his humility, says one; *how far*
His dreams are from ambition, says another;
He would not show his eloquence, lest that
Should draw him into office: and a third
Is meditating on some thrifty suit
To beg 'fore dinner. Had I as many hands
As had Briareus, I'd extend them all
To catch this office; 'twas my sleep's disturber,
My diet's ill digestion, my melancholy,
Past physic's cure.

Enter OPPIUS, MINUTIUS, *and* LICTORS.

Claud. The senators return.

Min. My lord, your answer?

App. To obey, my lord, and to know how to rule
Do differ much: to obey by nature comes,
But to command by long experience.
Never were great men in so eminent place
Without their shadows. Envy will attend
On greatness till this general frame takes end.
'Twixt these extremes of state and banishment,
My mind hath held long conflict, and at last
I thus return my answer: *(to his Cousins.)* Noble friends,
We now must part; necessity of state
Compels it so;
I must inhabit now a place unknown;
You see't compels me leave you. Fare you well.

1 *Cous.* To banishment, my lord?

App. I am given up
To a long travel full of fear and danger;
To waste the day in sweat, and the cold night
In a most desolate contemplation;
Banish'd from all my kindred and my friends;
Yea, banish'd from myself; for I accept
This honourable calling.

Min. Worthy Appius,
The gods conduct you hither! Lictors, his robes.

2 *Cous.* We are made for ever, noble kinsman:
'Twas but to fright us.

App. But, my loving kinsmen,
Mistake me not; for what I spake was true,
Bear witness all the gods: I told you first,
I was to inhabit in a place unknown:

'Tis very certain, for this reverend seat
Receives me as a pupil; rather gives
Ornament to the person, than our person
The least of grace to it. I show'd you next
I am to travail; 'tis a certain truth:
Look! by how much the labour of the mind
Exceeds the body's, so far am I bound
With pain and industry, beyond the toil
Of those that sweat in war; beyond the toil
Of any artisan: pale cheeks, and sunk eyes,
A head with watching dizied, and a hair
Turn'd white in youth; all these at a dear rate
We purchase speedily that tend a state.
I told you *I must leave you;* 'tis most true:
Henceforth the face of a barbarian
And yours shall be all one; henceforth I'll know
you
But only by your virtue: brother or father,
In dishonest suit, shall be to me
As is the branded slave: Justice should have
No kindred, friends, nor foes, nor hate, nor love;
As free from passion as the gods above.
I was your friend and kinsman, now your judge;
And whilst I hold the scales, a downy feather
Shall as soon turn them as a mass of pearl,
Or diamonds.

Claud. (Aside.) Excellent, excellent lapwing!
There's other stuff closed in that subtle breast.
He sings and beats his wings far from his nest.

App. So, gentlemen, I take it here takes end
Your business, my acquintance: fare you well.

Cous. Here's a quick change! who did expect this cloud?
Thus men when they grow great do straight grow
proud.

App. Now to our present business at the camp.
The army that doth winter 'fore Agidon,
Is much distress'd we hear: Minutius,
You, with the levies and the little corn
This present dearth will yield, are speedily
To hasten thither; so to appease the mind
Of the intemperate soldier.

Min. I am ready;
The levies do attend me: our lieutenant
Send on our troops.

App. Farewell, Minutius.
The gods go with you, and be still at hand
To add a triumph to your bold command.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, *and* VIRGINIA.

Num. Noble Icilius, welcome; teach yourself
A bolder freedom here; for, by our love,
Your suit to my fair niece doth parallel
Her kindred's wishes. There's not in all Rome
A man that is by honour more approv'd,
Nor worthier, were you poor, to be belov'd.

Icil. You give me, noble lord, that character
Which I cou'd never yet read in myself:
But from your censure* shall I take much care
To adorn it with the fairest ornaments
Of unambitious virtue: here I hold
My honourable pattern; one whose mind
Appears more like a ceremonious chapel
Full of sweet music, than a thronging presence.
I am confirm'd, the court doth make some show

* "*Censure,*" used here in its primitive sense of *opinion* or *judgment.*

Fairer than else they would do; but her port,
Being simple virtue, beautifies the court.
Virg. It is a flattery, my lord,
You breathe upon me; and it shows much like
The borrowed painting which some ladies use,
It is not to continue many days;
My wedding garments will outwear this praise.
Num. Thus ladies still foretel the funeral
Of their lords' kindness.

Enter a SERVANT, *whispers* ICILIUS.

But, my lord, what news?
Icil. Virginius, my lord, your noble brother,
Disguis'd in dust and sweat, is new arriv'd
Within the city: troops of artisans
Follow his panting horse, and with a strange
Confused noise, partly with joy to see him,
Partly with fear for what his haste portends,
They show as if a sudden mutiny
O'erspread the city.
Num. Cousin, take your chamber.
[*Exit Virg.*
What business from the camp?
Icil. Sure, sir, it bears
The form of some great danger; for his horse,
Bloody with spurring, shows as if he came
From forth a battle: never did you see
Mongst quails or cocks in fight a bloodier heel,
Than that your brother strikes with. In this form
Of o'erspent horseman, having, as it seems,
With the distracting of his news, forgot
House, friends, or change of raiment, he is gone
To th' Senate house.
Num. Now the gods bring us safety!

The face of this is cloudy; let us haste
To th' Senate house, and there enquire how near
The body moves of this our threaten'd fear.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter APPIUS *melancholy, followed by* CLAUDIUS.

Claud. My lord——
App. Thou troublest me.
Claud. My hand's as ready arm'd to work your peace,
As my tongue bold to enquire your discontents.
Good my lord, hear me.
App. I am at much variance
Within myself; there's discord in my blood;
My powers are all in combat; I have nothing
Left but sedition in me.
Claud. Trust my bosom
To be the closet of your private griefs.
Believe me, I am uncranied.
App. May I trust thee?
Claud. As the firm centre to endure the burden
Of your light foot; as you would trust the poles
To bear on them this airy canopy,
And not to fear their shrinking. I am strong,
Fix'd, and unshaking.
Appius. Art thou? Then thine ever:
I love.
Claud. Ha! ha! he!
App. Can this my ponderous secresy
Be in thine ear so light? seems my disturbance
Worthy such scorn that thou deridest my griefs?
Believe me, Claudius, I am not a twig
That every gust can shake, but 'tis a tempest
That must be able to use violence

On my grown branches. Wherefore laugh'st thou then?

Claud. Not that you're mov'd; it makes me smile in scorn
That wise men cannot understand themselves,
Nor know their own prov'd greatness. Claudius laughs not
To think you love; but that you are so hopeless
Not to presume to enjoy whom you affect.
What's she in Rome your greatness cannot awe,
Or your rich purse purchase? Promises, and threats,
Are statemens' lictors to arrest such pleasures
As they would bring within their strict commands:
Why should my lord droop, or deject his eye?
Can you command Rome, and not countermand
A woman's weakness? Let your grace bestow
Your purse and power on me. I'll prostrate you.

App. Ask both, and lavish them to purchase me
The rich fee simple of Virginia's heart.

Claud. Virginia's?

App. Hers.

Claud. I have already found
An easy path which you may safely tread,
Yet no man trace you.

App. Thou art my comforter.

Claud. Her father's busied in our foreign wars,
And there hath chief employment: all their pay
Must your discretion scantle; keep it back;
Restrain it in the common treasury:
Thus may a statesman 'gainst a soldier stand,
To keep his purse weak, whilst you arm his hand.
Her father thus kept low, gifts and rewards
Will tempt the maid the sooner; nay, haply draw
The father in to plead in your behalf.

But should these fail, then siege her virgin tower
With two* prevailing engines, fear and power.

App. Go then, and prove a speeding advocate:
Arm thee with all our bounty, oratory,
Variety of promise.

Enter VALERIUS.

Val. Appius†, the Decemvirate intreat
Your voice in this day's senate. Old Virginius
Craves audience from the camp, with earnest suit
For quick dispatch.

App. We will attend the Senate. Claudius,
begone.

Enter OPPIUS, VALERIUS, NUMITOR, *&c.*

Opp. We sent to you to assist us in this counsel
Touching the expeditions of our war.

App. Ours is a willing presence to the trouble
Of all state cares. Admit him from the camp.

Enter VIRGINIUS.

Opp. Speak the camp's will.

Virginius. The camp wants money; we have
store of knocks,
And wounds God's plenty, but we have no pay:
This three months did we never house our heads,
But in yon great star-chamber; never bedded
But in the cold field-beds; our victual fails us,
Yet meet with no supply; we're fairly promis'd,
But soldiers cannot feed on promises,

* The quarto reads, "*too* prevailing engines," which, though sense, is not, I think, the right reading.

† The quarto reads, "*L.* Appius;" but *L.* is not the initial of any part of his name.

All our provant*; apparel's torn to rags,
And our munition fails us. Will you send us
To fight for Rome like beggars? Noble gentlemen,
Are you the high state of Decemviri,
That have those things in manage? Pity us,
For we have need on't. Let not your delays
Be cold to us, whose bloods have oft been heated
To gain you fame and riches. Prove not to us
(Being our friends) worse foes than we fight with:
Let's not be starv'd in kindness. Sleep you now
Upon the bench, when your deaf ears should listen
Unto the wretchless clamours of the poor?
Then would I had my drums here, they might rattle,
And rouse you to attendance. Most grave fathers,
Show yourselves worthy stewards to our mother,
Fair Rome, to whom we are no bastard sons,
Though we be soldiers. She hath in her store
Food to maintain life in the camp, as well
As surfeit for the city. Do not save

* The quarto reads,

"We're fairly promis'd,
But souldiers cannot feed on promises;
All our provant, apparell's torne to rags,
And our munition fails us."

I have little doubt that Virginius means to say, "We're fairly promised, but soldiers cannot live on promises, which is *all our provisions;*" in which sense the word occurs in Shakspeare's "Coriolanus;" in the "Bonducca," and "Martial Maid" of Beaumont and Fletcher; and again in the present play. We read, however, of "a *provant rapier,*" and "a *provant sword*" in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," and Massinger's "Maid of Honour," where Gifford observes it signifies, "a plain, unornamented sword, such as the army is supplied with." And further, that though properly it means provisions, "our old writers extend it to all the articles which make up the magazines of an army."

The foe a labour: send us some supply,
Lest ere they kill us, we by famine die.

App. Shall I, my lords, give answer to this soldier?

Opp. Be you the city's voice.

App. Virginius, we would have you thus possess'd*:

We sit not here to be prescrib'd and taught,
Nor to have any suiter give us limit,
Whose power admits no curb. Next know, Virginius,
The camp's our servant, and must be dispos'd,
Control'd, and us'd by us, that have the strength
To knit it, or dissolve it. When we please,
Out of our princely grace and clemency,
To look upon your wants, it may be then
We shall redress them: but till then, it fits not
That any petty fellow wag'd by us
Should have a tongue sound here, before a bench
Of such grave auditors. Further——

Virginius. Pray give me leave.
Not here? Pray, Appius, is not this the judgment seat?
Where should a poor man's cause be heard but here?
To you the statists of long-flourishing Rome,
To you I call, if you have charity,
If you be humane, and not quite giv'n o'er
To furs and metal; if you be Romans,
If you have any soldier's blood at all
Flow in your veins, help with your able arms

* "*Possessed*," informed, instructed. It continually occurs in this sense in the writers of the age.

To prop a sinking camp; an infinite
Of fair Rome's sons, cold, weak, hungry, and clothless,
Would feed upon your surfeit. Will you save them,
Or shall they perish?
App. What we will, we will;
Be that your answer: perhaps at further leisure
We'll help you; not your merit, but our pleasure.
Virginius. I will not curse thee, Appius; but I wish
Thou wert i' th' camp amongst the mutineers
To tell my answers, not to trouble me.
Make you us dogs, yet not allow us bones?
Oh, what are soldiers come too! Shall your camp,
The strength of all your peace, and the iron wall
That rings this pomp in from invasive steel,
Shall that decay? Then let the foreign fires
Climb o'er these buildings; let the sword and slaughter
Chase the gown'd senate through the streets of Rome,
To double die their robes in scarlet; let
The enemy's stripp'd arm have his crimson'd brawns
Up to the elbows in your traitorous blood;
Let Janus' temple be devolv'd; your treasures
Ripp'd up to pay the common adversaries
With our due wages. Do you look for less?
The rottenness of this misgovern'd state
Must grow to some disease incurable,
Save with a sack or slaughter.
App. You're too bold.
Virginius. Know you our extremities?
App. We do.

Virginius. And will not help them?
App. Yes.
Virginius. When?
App. Hereafter.
Virginius. Hereafter! When so many gallant spirits
That yet may stand betwixt you and destruction,
Are sunk in death? *Hereafter!* when disorder
Hath swallowed all our forces?
App. We'll hear no more.
Opp. Peace, fellow, peace! know the Decemviri,
And their authority, we shall commit you else.
Viginius. Do so, and I shall thank you; be relieved,
And have a strong house o'er me; fear no alarms
Given in the night by any quick perdue.
Your guilty in the city feed more dainty
Than doth your general. 'Tis a better office
To be an under keeper, than a captain:
The gods of Rome amend it!
App. Break up the senate.
Virginius. And shall I have no answer?
App. So farewell.
Virginius. What slave would be a soldier to be censured
By such as ne'er saw danger? To have our pay,
Our worths, and merits, balanc'd in the scale
Of base moth-eaten peace. I have had wounds
Would have made all this bench faint, and look pale,
But to behold them search'd. They lay their heads
On their soft pillows, pore upon their bags,
Grow fat with laziness and resty ease;
And us that stand betwixt them and disaster

They will not spare a drachma. Oh! my soldiers,
Before you want, I'll sell my small possessions
Even to my skin to help you; plate and jewels
All shall be yours. Men that are men indeed,
The earth shall find, the sun and air must feed.

Enter NUMITORIUS, ICILIUS, VALERIUS, *and* VIRGINIA, *who kneels to her father.*

Num. Your daughter, noble brother, hearing late
Of your arrival from the camp, most humbly
Prostrates her filial duty.

Virginius. Daughter, rise.
And, brother, I am only rich in her,
And in your love, link'd with the honour'd friendship
Of those fair Roman lords. For you, Icilius,
I hear I must adopt you with the title
Of a new son; you are Virginia's chief;
And I am proud she hath built her fair election
Upon such store of virtues. May you grow,
Although a city's child, to know a soldier,
And rate him to his merit.

Icil. Noble father,
(For henceforth I shall only use that name)
Our meeting was to urge you to the process
Of our fair contract.

Virginius. Witness, gentlemen,
Here I give up a father's interest,
But not a father's love; that I will ever
Wear next my heart, for it was born with her,
And grows still with my age.

Num. Icilius,
Receive her: witness, noble gentlemen.

Val. With all my heart. I would Icilius could

do as much for me; but Rome affords not such another Virginia.

Virg. I am my father's daughter, and by him
I must be sway'd in all things.

Num. Brother, this happy contract asks a feast,
As a thing due to such solemnities.
It shall be at my house, where we this night
Will sport away some hours.

Virginius. I must to horse.

Num. What, ride to night?

Virginius. Must see the camp to-night.
'Tis full of trouble and distracted fears,
And may grow mutinous. I am bent to ride.

Val. To-night?

Virginius. I am engag'd: short farewells now must serve;
The universal business calls me hence,
That toucheth a whole people. Rome, I fear,
Thou wilt pay use for what thou dost forbear.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter VIRGINIA, *followed by* CORBULO, *after her* CLAUDIUS *with presents.*

Virg. Sirrah, go tell Calphurnia I am walking
To take the air; intreat her company:
Say I attend her coming.

Corb. Madam, I shall: but if you could walk abroad, and get an heir, it were better; for your father hath a fair revenue, and never a son to inherit.

Virg. You are, sirrah——

Corb. Yes, I am sirrah; but not the party that is born to do that: though I have no lordships, yet I have so much manners to give my betters place.

Virg. Whom mean you by your betters?

Corb. I hope I have learnt to know the three degrees of comparison: for though I be *bonus*, and you *melior* as well as *mulier;* yet my Lord Icilius is *optimus.*

Virg. I see there's nothing in such private done,
But you must inquire after.

Corb. And can you blame us, madam, to long for the merry day, as you do for the merry night?

Virg. Will you be gone, sir?

Corb. Oh yes, to my Lady Calphurnia's, I remember my errand. [*Exit Corbulo.*

Virg. My father's wondrous pensive, and withal
With a suppress'd rage left his house displeas'd,
And so in post is hurried to the camp:
It sads me much; to expel which melancholy,
I have sent for company.

Enter CLAUDIUS *and Musicians.*

Claud. This opportunity was subtly waited:
It is the best part of a politician,
When he would compass ought to fame his industry,
Wisely to wait the advantage of the hours;
His happy minutes are not always present.
(To the Musicians.) Express your greatest art,
Virginia hears you. [*Song* *.

Virg. Oh, I conceive the occasion of this harmony:
Icilius sent it, I must thank his kindness.

Claud. Let not Virginia rate† her contemplation
So high, to call this visit an intrusion;
For when she understands I took my message
From one that did compose it with affection,
I know she will not only extend pardon,
But grace it with her favour.

Virg. You mediate excuse for courtesies,
As if I were so barren of civility,
Not to esteem it worthy of my thanks;
Assure yourself I could be longer patient
To hear my ears so feasted.

* These songs are very rarely found in the quartos.

† The quarto reads, "*wate* her contemplation." There can be little doubt it was an error of the printer's, and that the right reading is restored.

Claud. (To the Musicians.) Join all your voices
till you make the air
Proud to usurp your notes, and to please her
With a sweet echo; serve Virginia's pleasure.
[*Song.*
As you have been so full of gentleness
To hear with patience what was brought to serve
you,
So hearken with your usual clemency
To the relation of a lover's sufferings:
Your figure still does revel in his dreams,
He banquets on your memory, yet finds
Not thoughts enough to satisfy his wishes;
As if Virginia had compos'd his heart,
And fill'd it with her beauty.
Virg. I see he is a miser in his wishes,
And thinks he never has enough of that
Which only he possesses: but, to give
His wishes satisfaction, let him know
His heart and mine do dwell so near together,
That hourly they converse and guard each other.
Claud. Is fair Virginia confident she knows
Her favour dwells with the same man I plead for?
Virg. —— Unto Icilius.
Claud. Worthy fair one,
I would not wrong your worth so to employ
My language for a man so much beneath
The merit of your beauty: he I plead for
Has power to make your beauty populous*;
Your frown shall awe the world; and in your
smile
Great Rome shall build her happiness;

* "*Populous*" must be used here in the same sense as *popular*. Should we not substitute it?

Honour and wealth shall not be stil'd companions,
But servants to your pleasure:
Then, shall Icilius (but a refin'd citizen)
Boast your affection, when Lord Appius loves you?

Virg. Bless his great lordship! I was much mistaken.
Let thy lord know, thou advocate of lust,
All the intentions of that youth are honourable,
Whilst his are fill'd with sensuality:
And for a final resolution know,
Our hearts in love, like twins, alike shall grow.
[*Exit.*

Claud. Had I a wife or daughter that could please him
I would devote her to him; but I must
Shadow this scorn, and soothe him still in lust.
[*Exit.*

The Camp before Agidon. Enter SIX SOLDIERS.

1 *Sold.* What news yet of Virginius's return?
2 *Sold.* Not any.
1 *Sold.* Oh, the misery of soldiers!
They doubly starve us with fair promises.
We spread the earth like hail, or new reap'd corn
In this fierce famine; and yet patiently
Make our obedience the confined jail
That starves us.
3 *Sold.* Soldiers, let us draw our swords
While we have strength to use them.
1 *Sold.* 'Tis a motion
Which nature and necessity commands.

Enter MINUTIUS.

Min. You're of Virginius's regiment.

Omnes. We are.

Min. Why do you swarm in troops thus? To your quarter!

Is our command grown idle? To your trench!
Come, I'll divide you: this your conference
Is not without suspect of mutiny.

1 *Sold.* Soldiers, shall I relate the grievances
Of the whole regiment?

Omnes. Boldly.

1 *Sold.* Then thus, my lord——

Min. Come, I will not hear thee.

1 *Sold.* Sir, you shall.
Sound all the drums and trumpets in the camp,
To drown my utterence, yet above them all
I'll rear our just complaint. Stir not, my lord!
I vow you are not safe, if you but move
A sinew till you hear us.

Min. Well, sir, command us: you are the general.

1 *Sold.* No, my lord, not I;
I am almost starved; I wake in the wet trench,
Loaded with more cold iron than a jail
Would give a murderer, while the general
Sleeps in a field-bed, and to mock our hunger
Feeds us with scent of the most curious fare
That makes his tables crack; our pay detained
By those that are our leaders; and at once
We in this sad, and unprepared plight,
With the enemy and famine daily fight.

Min. Do you threaten us?

Omnes. Sir, you shall hear him out.

1 *Sold.* You send us whips, and iron manacles,
And shackles plenty, but the devil a coin.
Would you teach us* that canibal trick, my lord,
Which some rich men i' th' city oft do use;
Shall's one devour another?

Min. Will you hear me?

1 *Sold.* Oh, Rome, thou'rt grown a most unnatural mother,
To those have held thee by the golden locks
From sinking into ruin! Romulus
Was fed by a she wolf, but now our wolves
Instead of feeding us devour our flesh,
Carouse our blood, yet are not drunk with it,
For three parts of 't is water.

Min. Your captain,
Noble Virginius, is sent to Rome
For ease of all your grievances.

1 *Sold.* 'Tis false!

Omnes. Ay, 'tis false!

1 *Sold.* He's stol'n away from 's, never to return:
And now his age will suffer him no more
Deal on the enemy, belike he'll turn
An usurer, and in the city air
Cut poor mens' throats at home, sitting in's chair.

Min. You wrong one of the honourablest commanders.

Omnes. Honourable commander?

1 *Sold.* Commander? Ay, my lord, there goes the thrift:

* "The quarto reads, "Would you *would* teach us." But the soldier intends, I conceive, to ask the question, and not to express it as his wish.

In victories, the general and commanders
Share all the honour, as they share the spoil;
But in our overthrows, where lies the blame?
The common soldier's fault; ours is the shame.
What is the reason, that being so far distant
From the affrighted enemy, we lie
I' th' open field, subject to the sick humours
Of heaven and earth, unless you cou'd bestow
Two summers of us? Shall I tell you truth,
You account the expence of engines, and of swords,
Of horses and of armour dearer far,
Than soldiers lives.

Omnes. Now by the gods you do!

1 *Sold.* Observe you not the ravens and the crows
Have left the city surfeit, and with us
They make full banquets. Come, you birds of death,
And fill your greedy crops with human flesh;
Then to the city fly, disgorge it there
Before the senate, and from thence arise
A plague to choak all Rome!

Omnes. And all the suburbs!

Min. Upon a soldier's word, bold gentlemen,
I expect every hour Virginius
To bring fresh comfort.

Omnes. Whom? Virginius?

1 *Sold.* Now, by the gods, if ever he return
We'll drag him to the slaughter by his locks,
Turned white with riot and incontinence,
And leave a president to all the world,
How captains use their soldiers!

Enter VIRGINIUS.

Min. See, he's returned.
Virginius, you are not safe; retire,
Your troops are mutinous; we are begirt
With enemies more daring, and more fierce,
Than is the common foe.
Virg. My troops, my lord?
Min. Your life is threaten'd by these desperate men;
Betake you to your horse.
Virg. My noble lord,
I never yet profess'd to teach the art
Of flying. Ha! our troops grown mutinous?
He dares not look on me with half a face
That spread this wildfire. Where is our lieutenant?

Enter VALERIUS.

Val. My lord.
Virginius. Sirrah, order our companies.
Min. What do you mean, my lord?
Virginius. Take air a little, they have heated me.
Sirrah, is't you will mutiny?
3 *Sold.* Not I, sir.
Virginius. Is your gall burst, you traitor?
4 *Sold.* The gods defend sir!
Virginius. Or is your stomach sea-sick? doth it rise?
I'll make a passage for it.
5 *Sold.* Noble captain, I'll die beneath your foot.
Virginius. You rough porcupine, ha!
Do you bristle, do you shoot your quills, you rogue?

1 *Sold.* They have no points to hurt you, noble captain.

Virginius. Was't you, my nimble shaver, that would whet
Your sword 'gainst your commander's throat, you sirrah?

6 *Sold.* My lord, I never dream'd on't.

Virginius. Slaves and cowards,
What are you choleric now? By the gods,
The way to purge it were to let you blood!
I am i' th' centre of you, and I'll make
The proudest of you teach the aspen leaf
To tremble, when I breathe.

Min. A strange conversion.

Virginius. Advance your pikes! the word!

Omnes. Advance your pikes!

Virginius. See, noble lord, these are no mutineers,
These are obedient soldiers, civil men:
You shall command these, if your lordship please,
To fill a ditch up with their slaughtered bodies,
That with more ease you may assault some town.
So now lay down your arms! villains and traitors,
I here cashier you: hence! from me, my poison!
Not worthy of our discipline: go beg,
Go beg, you mutinous rogues! brag of the service
You ne'er durst look on: it were charity
To hang you, for my mind gives you're reserv'd
To rob poor market women.

Min. Oh, Virginius!

Virginius. I do beseech you to confirm my sentence,
As you respect me. I will stand myself
For the whole regiment; and safer far

In mine own single valour, than begirt
With cowards and with traitors.

Min. Oh, my lord! you are too severe.

Virginius. Now, by the gods, my lord,
You know no discipline to pity them.
Precious devils! no sooner my back turn'd,
But presently to mutiny.

Omnes. Dear captain.

Virginius. Refuse me*! if such traitorous rogues
Would not confound an army. When do you
march?
When do you march, gentlemen?

1 *Sold.* My lord, we'll starve first;
We'll hang first; by the gods, do any thing
Ere we'll forsake you.

Min. Good Virginius,
Limit your passion.

Virginius. Sir, you may take my place,
Not my just anger from me. These are they
Have bred a dearth i' th' camp: I'll wish our foes
No greater plague than to have their company:
Show but among them all so many scars
As stick upon this flesh, I'll pardon them.

Min. How now, my lord, breathless?

Virginius. By your favour. I ha' said——
Mischiefs confound me! if I could not wish
My youth renewed again, with all her follies,
Only to ha' breath enough to rail against
These——'tis too short.

* This, signifying *may the gods, or may God refuse me*, seems to have been a fashionable asseveration in the time of our poet. So in Rowley's "Match at Midnight," Tim says, "Oh, these wicked elder brothers, that swear *refuse them*, and drink nothing but wicked sack." Act I. Scene I.

Min. See, gentlemen, what strange distraction
Your falling off from duty hath begot
In this most noble soldier: you may live,
The meanest of you, to command a troop,
And then in others you'll correct those faults
Which in yourselves you cherish'd: every captain
Bears in his private government that form,
Which kings should o'er his subjects, and to them
Should be the like obedience*. We confess
You have been distress'd; but can you justly challenge
Any commander that hath surfeited,
While that your food was limited? You cannot.

Virginius. My lord, I have shared with them an equal fortune,
Hunger and cold, march'd thorough watry fens,
Borne as great burdens as the pioneer,
When scarce the ground would bear me.

Min. Good my lord, give us leave to proceed.
The punishment your captain hath inflicted
Is not sufficient; for it cannot bring
Any example to succeeding times
Of penance worth your faulting: happily
It may in you beget a certain shame;
But it will in others a strong hope
Of the like lenity. Yet, gentlemen,
You have in one thing given me such a taste
Of your obedience, when the fire was raised
Of fierce sedition, and the cheek was swoll'n
To sound the fatal trumpet, then the sight
Of this your worthy captain did disperse

* The quarto reads, "*obedient*;" and it was probably so written, for in that age adjectives were not unfrequently used as substantives.

All those unfruitful humours, and even then
Convert you from fierce tigers to staid men:
We therefore pardon you, and do restore
Your captain to you, you unto your captain.

Omnes. The gods requite you! noble general.

Min. My lord! my lord!

Omnes. Your pardon, noble captain.

Virginius. Well, you are the general, and the fault is quit:
A soldier's tears, an elder brother's wit,
Have little salt in them, nor do they season
Things worth observing, for their want of reason.
Take up your arms and use them, do, I pray,
Ere long you'll take your legs to run away.

Min. And what supply from Rome?

Virginius. Good store of corn.

Min. What entertainment there?

Virginius. Most honourable,
Especially by the Lord Appius.
There is great hope that Appius will grow
The soldier's patron: with what vehemency
He urg'd our wants, and with what expedition
He hasted the supplies, it is almost
Incredible. There's promis'd to the soldier,
Besides their corn, a bounteous donative;
[*A shout.*
But 'tis not certain yet when 't shall be paid.

Min. How for your own particular?

Virginius. My lord,
I was not enter'd fully two pike's length
Into the senate, but they all stood bare,
And each man offer'd me his seat. The business
For which I went dispatch'd; what gifts, what favours,

Were done me, your good lordship shall not hear,
For you would wonder at them; only this,
'Twould make a man fight up to th' neck in blood,
To think how nobly he shall be received
When he returns to th' city.

Min. 'Tis well;
Give order the provision be divided,
And sent to every quarter.

Virginius. Sir, it shall.
Thus men must slight their wrongs, or else conceal them,
When general safety wills us not reveal them.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene—Rome. Enter TWO PETITIONERS *at one Door, at the other* CLAUDIUS.

1 *Pet.* Pray is your lord at leisure?

Claud. What is your suit?

1 *Pet.* To accept this poor petition, which makes known
My many wrongs, in which I crave his justice,
And upright sentence to support my cause,
Which else is trod down by oppression.

Claud. My lord's hand is the prop of innocence,
And if your cause be worthy his supportance
It cannot fall.

1 *Pet.* The gods of Rome protect him!

Claud. What, is your paper too petitionary?

2 *Pet.* It leans upon the justice of the judge,
Your noble lord, the very stay of Rome.

Claud. And surer basis, for a poor man's cause,
She cannot yield. Your papers I'll deliver,
And when my lord ascends the judgment-seat,
You shall find gracious comfort.

Enter ICILIUS *hastily.*

Icil. Where's your lord?

Claud. (Aside.) Icilius? fair Virginia's late betroth'd?

Icil. Your ears, I hope, you have not forfeited,
That you return no answer. Where's your lord?

Claud. At's study.

Icil. I desire admittance to him.

Claud. Please you attend, I'll know his lordship's pleasure.
(Aside.) Icilius? I pray heaven she have not blabb'd. [*Exit.*

Icil. Attend? A petty lawyer t'other day,
Glad of a fee, but call'd to eminent place,
Even to his betters now the word's *attend.*
This gowned office, what a breadth it bears!
How many tempests wait upon his frown!

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. All the petitioners withdraw. *(Exit Petit.)* Lord Appius
Must have this place more private, as a favour
Reserv'd for you, Icilius. Here's my lord.

Enter APPIUS *preceded by* LICTORS.

App. Begone! This place is only spar'd for us,
[*Exit Lictors.*
And you, Icilius. Now your business.

Icil. May I speak it freely?

App. We have suffering ears,
A heart the softest down may penetrate.
Proceed.

Icil. My lord——

App. We are private; pray your courtesy.

Icil. My duty——

App. Leave that to the public eye
Of Rome, and of Rome's people. Claudius, there!

Claud. My lord?

App. Place me a second chair; that done,
Remove yourself. So, now your absence, Claudius.

[*Claudius places a chair and then retires.*

Icilius, sit; this grace we make not common
Unto the noblest Roman, but to you
Our love affords it freely. Now your suit?

Icil. It is, you would be kind unto the camp.

App. Wherein, Icilius, doth the camp touch thee?

Icil. Thus: Old Virginius, now my father-in-law,
Kept from the public pay, consumes himself,
Sells his revenues, turns his plate to coin,
To wage his soldiers, and supply the camp;
Wasting that useful substance which indeed
Should rise to me, as my Virginia's dowry.

App. We meet that opposition thus, Icilius:
The camp's supplies doth not consist in us,
But those that keep the common Treasury;
Speak or intreat we may, but not command.
But, sir, I wonder you, so brave a youth,
Son to a thrifty Roman, should ally you,
And knit your strong arms to such falling branches;
Which rather in their ruin will bear down
Your strength, than you support their rottenness.
Be swayed by me; fly from that ruinous house,
Whose fall may crush you, and contract with mine,
Whose bases are of marble, deeply fix'd

* Maugre all gusts and [all] impending storms.
Cast off that beggar's daughter, poor Virginia,
Whose dowry and beauty I'll see trebled both,
In one ally'd to me. Smile you, Icilius?

Icil. My lord, my lord, think you I can imagine
Your close and sparing hand can be profuse
To give that man a palace, whom you late
Deny'd a cottage? Will you from your own coffers
Grant me a treble dowry, yet interpose me
A poor third from the common Treasury?
You must move me by possibilities,
For I have brains: give first your hand and seal,
That old Virginius shall receive his pay,
Both for himself and soldiers, and that done,
I shall perhaps be soon induc'd to think,
That you, who with such willingness did that—

App. Is my love mispriz'd?

Icil. Not to Virginia.

App. Virginia?

Icil. Yes Virginia, lustful lord.
I did but trace your cunning all this while:
You would bestow me on some Appian trull,
And for that dross to cheat me of my gold:
For this the camp pines, and the city smarts:
All Rome fares worse for thy incontinence.

App. Mine, boy?

Icil. Thine, judge. This hand hath intercepted
Thy letters, and perus'd thy tempting guests;
These ears have heard thy amorous passion,
wretch!

* The quarto reads,

"*To* mauger all gusts and impending storms."

and it is not impossible it was so written. The reader may prefer amending it "To *weather* all gusts," &c.

These eyes beheld thy treacherous name subscrib'd.
A judge? a devil!
App. Come, I'll hear no more.
Icil. Sit still, or by the powerful gods of Rome
I'll nail thee to the chair: but suffer me,
I'll offend nothing but thine ears.
App. (Calls out.) Our secretary!
Icil. Tempt not a lover's fury; if thou dost,
Now by my vow, insculp'd in heaven, I'll send thee——
App. You see I am patient.
Icil. But withal revengeless.
App. So, say on.
Icil. Hope not of any grace, or the least favour:
I am so covetous of Virginia's love,
I cannot spare thee the least look, glance, touch:
Divide one bare imaginary thought
Into a thousand, thousand parts, and that
I'll not afford thee.
App. Thou shalt not.
Icil. Nay, I will not:
Hadst thou a judge's place above those judges
That judge all souls, having power to sentence me,
I would not bribe thee, no not with one hair
From her fair temples.
App. Thou should'st not.
Icil. Nay, I would not.
Think not her beauty shall have leave to crown
Thy lustful hopes with the least spark of bliss,
Or have thine ears charm'd with the ravishing sound
Even of her harshest phrase.
App. I will not.
Icil. Nay, thou shalt not.

She's mine, my soul is crown'd in her desire,
To her I'd travel through a land of fire.

App. Now have you done?

Icil. I have spoke my thoughts.

App. Then will thy fury give me leave to speak?

Icil. I pray say on.

App. Icilius, I must chide you, and withal
Tell you your rashness hath made forfeiture
Even of your precious life, which we esteem
Too dear to call in question. If I wish'd you
Of my alliance, graft into my blood,
Condemn you me for that? Oh, see the rashness
And blind misprision of distemper'd youth!
As for the maid Virginia, we are far
Even in least thought from her; and for those letters,
Tokens, and presents, we acknowledge none.
Alas! though great in place, we are not gods:
If any false impostor hath usurp'd
Our hand or greatness in his own behoof,
Can we help that? Icilius, there's our hand,
Your rashness we remit; let's have hereafter
Your love and best opinion. For your suit,
Repair to us at both our better leisures,
We'll breathe in it new life.

Icil. I crave your pardon.

App. Granted ere crav'd, my good Icilius.

Icil. —— Morrow.

App. It is no more indeed. Morrow, Icilius,
If any of our servants wait without,
Command them in.

Icil. I shall.

App. Our secretary;
We have use for him. Icilius, send him hither.
Again, good-morrow. [*Exit Icilius.*

Go to thy death, thy life is doom'd and cast.
Appius, be circumspect, and be not rash
In blood, as thou'rt in lust: be murderous still;
But when thou strik'st, with unseen weapons kill.

Enter CLAUDIUS.

Claud. My honourable lord.
App. Deride me, dog?
Claud. Who hath stir'd up this tempest in your brow?
App. Not you? fie! you.
Claud. All you Panthean gods
Confound me, if my soul be accessary
To your distractions!
App. To send a ruffian hither,
Even to my closet; first, to brave my greatness,
Play with my beard, revile me, taunt me, hiss me;
Nay, after all these deep disparagements,
Threat me with steel, and menace me unarm'd,
To nail me to my seat if I but mov'd:
All these are slight, slight toys.
Claud. Icilius do this?
App. Ruffian Icilius; he that in the front
Of a smooth citizen, bears the rugged soul
Of a most base banditti.
Claud. He shall die for't.
App. Be not too rash.
Claud. Were there no more men to support great Rome,
Even falling Rome should perish ere he stand:
I'll after him, and kill him.
App. Stay, I charge thee.
Lend me a patient ear: to right our wrongs,
We must not menace with a public hand;

We stand in the world's eye, and shall be tax'd
Of the least violence, where we revenge:
We should smile smoothest where our hate's most deep,
And when our spleen's broad waking, seem to sleep.
Let the young man play still upon the bit,
Till we have brought and train'd him to our lure;
Great men shoul dstrike but once, and then strike sure.

Claud. Love you Virginia still?

App. Do I still live?

Claud. Then she's your own. Virginius is, you say,
Still in the camp?

App. True.

Claud. Now in his absence will I claim Virginia
To be the daughter of a bondwoman,
And slave to me: to prove which, I'll produce
Firm proofs, notes probable, sound witnesses;
Then, having with your Lictors summon'd her,
I'll bring the cause before your judgment-seat;
Where, upon my infallid evidence,
You may pronounce the sentence on my side,
And she become your strumpet, not your bride.

App. Thou hast a copious brain: but how in this
Shall we dispose Icilius?

Claud. If he spurn,
Clap him up close; there's ways to charm his spleen.
By this no scandal can redound to you;
The cause is mine; you but the sentencer
Upon that evidence which I shall bring.
The business is, to ha' warrants by arrest,
To answer such things at the judgment-bar

As can be laid against her: ere her friends
Can be assembled, ere herself can study
Her answer, or scarce know her cause of summons
To descant on the matter, Appius may
Examine, try, and doom Virginia.
But all this must be sudden.

App. Thou art born
To mount me high above Icilius's scorn.
I'll leave it to thy manage. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. Scene I.

Enter Nurse *and* Corbulo.

Corb. What was that you said, Nurse?

Nurse. Why, I did say thou must bestir thyself.

Corb. I warrant you, I can bestir my stumps as soon as another, if fit occasion be offered: but why do you come upon me in such haste? Is it because, Nurse, I should come over you at leisure?

Nurse. Come over me, thou knave, what dost thou mean by that?

Corb. Only this; if you will come off, I will come on.

Nurse. My lord hath strangers to-night: you must make ready the parlour, a table and lights: nay when, I say?

Corb. Methinks you should rather wish for a bed than for a board, for darkness than for lights; yet I must confess you have been a light woman in your time: but now——

Nurse. But now? what now, you knave?

Corb. But now I'll go fetch the table and some lights presently.

Enter Numitorius, Horatio, Valerius, *and* Icilius.

Num. Some lights to usher in these gentlemen. Clear all the rooms without there. Sit, pray sit.

None interrupt our conference.

Enter VIRGINIA.

Ha, who's that?

Nurse. My most [sweet] child, if it please you*

Num. Fair Virginia, you are welcome.
The rest forbear us till we call. *(Exit Nurse and Corb.)* Sweet cousin,
Our business and the cause of our discourse
Admits you to this council: take your place.
Icilius, we are private; now proceed.

Icil. Then thus: Lord Appius doth intend me wrong;
And under his smooth calmness clokes a tempest,
That will ere long break out in violence
On me and on my fortunes.

Num. My good cousin,
You are young, and youth breeds rashness. Can I think
Lord Appius will do wrong, who is all justice;
The most austere and upright censurer
That ever sat upon the awful bench?

Val. Icilius, you are near to me in blood,
And I esteem your safety as mine own:
If you will needs wage† eminence and state,

* This speech is thus printed in the quarto:

"My most —— child, if it please you."

As there seems no object to be gained by the omission, I am inclined to think the printer could not ascertain the word in the MS. and left it to be afterwards filled up; when it was forgotten. There is no reason for the preference given to the word I have introduced; any other of a complimentary or endearing kind will do as well.

† *To wage* signifies here to fight, to combat: and it has been observed by Stevens, in his notes on "Lear" and "Othello,"

Choose out a weaker opposite, not one
That, in his arm, bears all the strength of Rome.
Num. Besides, Icilius,
Know you the danger what it is to scandal
One of his place and sway?
Icil. I know it, kinsmen; yet this popular greatness
Can be no bugbear to affright mine innocence.
No, his smooth crest hath cast a palped film
Over Rome's eyes. He juggles, a plain juggler;
Lord Appius is no less.
Num. Nay, then, cousin,
You are too harsh, and I must hear no more.
It ill becomes my place and gravity,
To lend a face to such reproachful terms
'Gainst one of his high presence.
Icil. Sit, pray sit,
To see me draw his picture 'fore your eyes,
To make this man seem monstrous, and this god
Rome so adores, a devil, a plain devil.
This lord, this judge, this Appius, that professeth
To all the world a vestal chastity,
Is an incontinent, loose leacher grown.
Num. Fie, cousin.
Icil. Nay, 'tis true. Daily and hourly
He tempts this blushing virgin with large promises,
With melting words, and presents of high rate,
To be the stale to his unchaste desires.
Omnes. Is't possible?
Icil. Possible!
'Tis actual truth; I pray but ask your niece.

that though it took its rise from the common expression, *to wage war*, yet it is often used absolutely and without the word war after it.

Virg. Most true, I am extremely tir'd and wearied
With messages and tokens of his love;
No answer, no repulse will satisfy
The tediousness of his importunate suit.
And whilst I could with modesty and honour,
Without the danger of reproach and shame,
I kept it secret from Icilius;
But when I saw their boldness found no limit,
And they from fair entreaty grew to threats,
I told him all.

Icil. True: understanding which
To him I went.

Val. To Appius?

Icil. To that giant,
The high Colossus that bestrides us all *;
I went to him.

Hor. How did you bear yourself?

Icil. Like Appius, at the first, dissemblingly;
But when I saw the coast clear, all withdrawn,
And none but we two in the lobby, then
I drew my poniard, took him by the throat,
And when he would have clamor'd, threaten'd death,
Unless he would with patience hear me out.

Num. Did he, Icilius?

Icil. I made him that he durst not squeak,
Not move an eye, not draw a breath too loud,
Nor stir a finger.

Hor. What succeeded then?

* So Shakspeare:

——— he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus. JULIUS CÆSAR. Act I. Scene II.

Num. Keep fast the door there! Sweet coz,
not too loud.
What then succeeded?

Icil. Why, I told him all;
Gave him his due, call'd him lascivious judge,
(A thousand things which I have now forgot)
Shew'd him his hand a witness 'gainst himself,
And every thing with such known circumstance,
That he might well excuse, but not deny.

Num. How parted you?

Icil. Why, friends in outward show:
But I perceiv'd his heart: that hypocrite
Was born to gull Rome, and deceive us all.
He swore to me quite to abjure her love;
Yet ere myself could reach Virginia's chamber,
One was before me with regreets* from him;
I know his hand. Th' intent of this our meeting
Was to intreat your counsel and advice:
The good old man, her father, is from home;
I think it good that she now in his absence
Should lodge in secret with some private friend,
Where Appius nor his Lictors, those bloodhounds,
Can hunt her out. You are her uncle, sir;
I pray counsel the best.

Num. To oppose ourselves,
Now in this heat, against so great a man,
Might, in my judgment, to ourselves bring danger,
And to my niece no safety. If we fall,
She cannot stand; let's then preserve ourselves
Until her father be discharg'd the camp.

* "With *regreets* from him." This word is several times used by Shakspeare in the simple sense of *greeting*, or *salutations*; it means here, I think, *fresh* or repeated salutations.

Val. And, good Icilius, for your private ends,
And the dear safety of your friends and kindred,
Against that statist, spare to use your spleen.

Icil. I will be sway'd by you. My lords, 'tis late
And time to break up conference. Noble uncle,
I am your growing debtor.

Num. Lights without there!

Icil. I will conduct Virginia to her lodging.
Good night to all at once.

Num. The gods of Rome protect you all! and then
We need not fear the envious rage of men.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter CLAUDIUS, *with Four* LICTORS.

Claud. Lictors, bestow yourselves in some close shops,
About the Forum, till you have the sight
Of fair Virginia; for I understand
This present morning she'll come forth to buy
Some necessaries at the sempsters' shops:
Howe'er accompanied be it your care
To seize her at our action. Good, my friends,
Disperse yourselves, and keep a careful watch.

1 *Lict.* 'Tis strange that ladies will not pay their debts.

2 *Lict.* It were strange, indeed, if that our Roman knights would give them good example and pay theirs.

1 *Lict.* The calendar that we Lictors go by, is all dog days.

2 *Lict.* Right; our common hunt is still to dog unthrifts.

1 *Lict.* And what's your book of common prayer?

2 *Lict.* Faith, only for the increase of riotous young gentlemen i' th' country, and banquerouts i' th' city.

1 *Lict.* I know no man more valiant than we are, for we back knights and gentlemen daily.

2 *Lict.* Right, we have them by the back hourly: your French fly applied to the nape of the neck for the French rheum, is not so sore a drawer as a Lictor.

1 *Lict.* Some say that if a little timbred fellow would justle a great loggerhead, let him be sure to lay him i' th' kennel; but when we shoulder a knight, or a knight's fellow, we make him more sure, for we kennel him i' th' counter.

2 *Lict.* Come, let's about our business.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter VIRGINIA, NURSE, *and* CORBULO.

Virg. You are grown wondrous amorous of late, Why do you look back so often?

Corb. Madam, I go as a Frenchman rides, all upon one buttock.

Virg. And what's the reason?

Corb. Your ladyship never saw a monkey in all your lifetime have a clog at's tail, but he's still looking back to see what the devil 'tis that follows him.

Nurse. Very good, we are your clogs then.

Virg. Your crest is grown regardant*. (*Points to the Nurse.*) Here's the beauty
That makes your eyes forgetful of their way.

* *Regardant* is a term in heraldry, and signifies *looking behind.*

Corb. Beauty? Oh, the gods! madam, I cannot endure her complexion.

Nurse. Why, sir, what's my complexion?

Corb. Thy complexion is just between a Moor and a French woman.

Virg. But she hath a matchless eye, sir.

Corb. True, her eyes are not right matches; besides, she is a widow.

Nurse. What then, I pray you?

Corb. Of all waters I would not have my beef powder'd with a widow's tears.

Virg. Why, I beseech you?

Corb. Oh, they are too fresh, madam; assure yourself they will not last for the death of fourteen husbands above a day and a quarter: besides, if a man come a wooing to a widow, and invite her to a banquet, contrary to the old rule* she will sooner fill her eye than her belly. Besides that, if you look into her estate, first—look you, here are four fingers—first the charge of her husband's funeral, next debts, and legacies, and lastly the reversion; now take away debts and legacies, and what remains for her second husband?

Nurse. I would some of the tribe heard you.

Corb. There's a certain fish, that as the learned divulge, is call'd a shark; now this fish can never feed while he swims upon's belly; marry, when he lies upon his back, oh, he takes it at pleasure.

* The old rule, here alluded to, is the proverbial expression of a greedy and gluttonous person, that "*his belly is sooner filled than his eye,*" viz. that he is desirous of more dainties than he can eat.

Virg. Well, sir, about your business; make provision
Of those things I directed.

Corb. Sweet lady, these eyes shall be the clerks of the kitchen for your belly; but I can assure you, woodcocks will be hard to be spoke with, for there's a great feast towards.

Virg. You are very pleasant.

Corb. And fresh cod is taken down thick and threefold; women without great bellies go together by the ears for't; and such a number of sweet-tooth'd caters in the market, not a calf's head to be got for love or money; mutton's mutton now.

Virg. Why, was it not so ever?

Corb. No, madam, the sinners i' th' suburbs had almost ta'en the name quite away from't, 'twas so cheap and common *: but now 'tis at a sweet reckoning; the term time is the mutton-monger in the whole calendar.

Nurse. Do your lawyers eat any salads with their mutton?

Corb. Yes, the younger revellers use capers to their mutton so long, till with their shuffling and cutting some of them be out at heels again. A bountiful mind and a full purse ever attend your ladyship.

Virg. Oh, I thank you.

* Prostitutes were very frequently called *mutton* or *laced mutton* in our poet's time, and Corbulo is playing on the double meaning of the word.

Enter CLAUDIUS *and Four* LICTORS.

Claud. See, yon's the lady.

Corb. I will buy up for your ladyship all the young cuckoos in the market.

Virg. What to do?

Corb. Oh, 'tis the most delicatest dish, I'll assure you, and newest in fashion: not a great feast in all Rome without a cuckoo.

Claud. Virginia.

Virg. Sir.

Claud. Mistress, you do not know me,
Yet we must be acquainted: follow me.

Virg. You do salute me strangely. Follow you?

Corb. Do you hear, sir; methinks you have followers enough. Many gentlemen that I know would not have so many tall followers as you have for the price of ten hunting geldings, I'll assure you.

Claud. Come, will you go?

Virg. Whither? by what command?

Claud. By warrant of these men, and privilege
I hold even on thy life. Come, ye proud dame,
[*Takes hold on her.*
You are not what you seem.

Virg. Uncivil sir,
What makes you thus familiar and thus bold?
Unhand me, villain!

Claud. What, mistress, to your lord?
He that can set the razor to your throat,
And punish you as freely as the gods,
No man to ask the cause? Thou art my slave,
And here I seize what's mine.

Virg. Ignoble villain!

I am as free as the best king or consul
Since Romulus. What dost thou mean? Unhand me!
(To Corb.) Give notice to my uncle and Icilius,
What violence is offer'd me.

Claud. Do, do.

Corb. Do you press women for soldiers, or do you beg women, instead of other commodities, to keep your hands in use? By this light, if thou hast any ears on thy head, as it is a question, I'll make my lord pull you out by th' ears, though you take a castle. [*Exit.*

Claud. Come, will you go along?

Nurse. Whither should she go, sir? Here's pulling and hauling a poor gentlewoman.

Claud. Hold you your prating reverence, the whip
Shall seize on you for your smooth cozenage.

Virg. Are not you servant to Lord Appius?

Claud. Howe'er I am your lord, and will approve it
'Fore all the senate.

Virg. Thou wilt prove thyself
The cursed pander for another's lust;
And this your plot shall burst about your ears
Like thunderbolts.

Claud. Hold you that confidence!
First I will seize you by the course of law,
And then I'll talk with you.

Enter ICILIUS *and* NUMITORIUS.

Num. How now, fair cousin?

Icil. How now, gentlemen?
What's the offence of fair Virginia,
You bend your weapons on us?

Lict. Sir, stand back, we fear a rescue.
Icil. There's no need of fear,
Where there's no cause of rescue. What's the matter?
Virg. Oh! my Icilius, your incredulity
Hath quite undone me: I am now no more
Virginius's daughter, so this villain urges,
But publish'd for his bondwoman.
Num. How's this?
Claud. 'Tis true, my lord,
And I will take my right by course of law.
Icil. Villains, set her free,
Or by the power of all our Roman gods,
I'll give that just revenge unto my rage
Which should be given to justice! Bondwoman?
Claud. Sir, we do not come to fight, we'll deal

Enter APPIUS.

By course of law. My lord, we fear a rescue.
App. A rescue? never fear't, here's none in presence
But civil men. My lord, I am glad to see you.
Noble Icilius, we shall ever love you.
Now, gentlemen, reach your petitions.
Icil. My lord, my lord——
App. Worthy Icilius, if you have any business defer't
Until to-morrow, or the afternoon:
I shall be proud to pleasure you.
Icil. *(Aside.)* The fox is earth'd, my lord, you cannot wind him yet*.

* There can be little doubt, I think, that this speech was not intended to be heard by Appius; but I am not satisfied that it is not addressed aside to Numitorius.

App. Stools for my noble friends.—I pray you sit.

Claud. May it please your lordship.

App. Why, uncivil sir,
Have I not begg'd forbearance of my best
And dearest friends, and must you trouble me?

Claud. My lord, I must be heard, and will be heard:
Were all the gods in parliament, I'd burst
Their silence with my importunity,
But they should hear me.

App. The fellow's mad!
We have no leisure now to hear you, sir.

Claud. Hast now no leisure to hear just complaints?
Resign thy place, O Appius, that some other
May do me justice then.

App. We'll hear't to-morrow.

Claud. Oh, my lord,
Deny me justice absolutely, rather
Than feed me with delays.

Icil. Good my lord, hear him:
And wonder when you hear him, that a case
So full of vile imposture should desire
To be unfolded.

Claud. Ay, my lord, 'tis true;
The imposture is on their parts.

App. Hold your prating:
Away with him to prison, clamorous fellow.
Suspect you our uprightness?

Claud. No, my lord;
But I have mighty enemies, my lord,
Will overflow my cause. See, here I hold
My bondwoman, that brags herself to be

Descended of a noble family.
My purse is too scant to wage law with them:
I am inforc'd be mine own advocate,
Not one will plead for me. Now if your lordship
Will do me justice, so; if not, then know
High hills are safe, when seas poor dales o'erflow.

App. Sirrah, I think it fit to let you know,
Ere you proceed in this your subtle suit,
What penalty and danger you accrue,
If you be found to double. Here's a virgin
Famous by birth, by education noble;
And she, forsooth, haply but to draw
Some piece of money from her worthy father,
Must needs be challeng'd for a bondwoman.
Sirrah, take heed, and well bethink yourself;
I'll make you a precedent to all the world,
If I but find you tripping.

Claud. Do it freely:
And view on that condition these just proofs.
[*Gives papers, which Appius reads.*

App. Is that the virgin's nurse?

Nurse. Her milch nurse, my lord: I had a sore hand with her for a year and a quarter: I have had somewhat to do with her since too, for the poor gentlewoman hath been so troubled with the green sickness.

Icil. I pray thee, Nurse, intreat Sertorius
To come and speak with me. [*Exit Nurse.*

App. Here is strange circumstance; view it, my lord:
If he should prove this, it would make Virginius
Think he were wronged.

Icil. There is a devilish cunning
Express'd in this black forgery.

App. Icilius and Virginia, pray come near;
Compound with this base fellow. You were better
Disburse some trifle than to undergo
The question of her freedom.
Icil. Oh! my lord,
She were not worth a handful of a bribe,
If she did need a bribe.
App. Nay, take your course,
I only give you my opinion,
I ask no fee for't. Do you know this fellow?
Virg. Yes, my lord, he's your servant.
App. You're i' th' right:
But will you truly know his character?
He was at first a petty notary;
A fellow that being trusted with large sums
Of honest citizens, to be employ'd
I' th' trade of usury; this gentleman,
Couching his credit like a tilting staff
Most cunningly it brake, and at one course
He ran away with thirty thousand pound:
Returning to the city seven year after,
Having compounded with his creditors
For the third moiety, he buys an office
Belonging to our place, depends on us;
In which the oppression and vile injuries
He hath done poor suitors, they have cause to rue,
And I to pity: he hath sold his smiles
For silver, but his promises for gold;
His delays have undone men.
The plague that in some folded cloud remains,
The bright sun soon disperseth; but observe,
When black infection in some dunghill lies,
There's work for bells and graves, if it do rise.
Num. He was an ill prop to your house, my lord,

App. 'Tis true, my lord; but we that have such servants,
Are like to cuckolds that have riotous wives;
We are the last that know it: this is it
Makes noblemen suspected to have done ill,
When the oppression lies in their proud followers.

Claud. My lord, it was some soothing sycophant,
Some base detracting rascal, that hath spread
This falsehood in your ears.

App. Peace! impudence:
Did I not yesterday, no longer since,
Surprise hee in thy study counterfeiting
Our hand?

Claud. 'Tis true, my lord.

App. Being subscribed
Unto a letter fill'd with amorous stuff
Unto this lady?

Claud. I have ask'd your pardon,
And gave you reason why I was so bold
To use that forgery.

App. Did you receive it?

Virg. I did, my lord, and I can show your lordship
A packet of such letters.

App. Now, by the gods,
I'll make you rue it! I beseech you, sir,
Show them the reason mov'd you counterfeit
Our letter.

Enter SERTORIUS *.

Claud. Sir, I had no other colour
To come to speak with her.

* The quarto reads, "Enter *Valerius*; but *Sertorius* was the person sent for by Icilius, and Valerius does not appear to have been present throughout this scene.

App. A goodly reason!
Did you until this hour acquaint the lady
With your intended suit?
Claud. At several times,
And would have drawn her by some private course
To have compounded for her liberty.
Virg. Now, by a virgin's honour and true birth,
'Tis false, my lord! I never had a dream
So terrible as is this monstrous devil.
App. Well, sir, referring my particular wrong
To a particular censure, I would know
What is your suit?
Claud. My lord, a speedy trial.
App. You shall obtain 't with all severity:
I will not give you longer time to dream
Upon new slights to cloke your forgery.
Observe you this camelion, my lords,
I'll make him change his colour presently.
Num. My lord, although th' uprightness of our cause
Needs no delays, yet for the satisfaction
Of old Virginius, let him be present
When we shall crave a trial.
App. Sir, it needs not:
Who stands for father of the innocent,
If not the judge? I'll save the poor old man
That needless travel.
Virg. With your favour, sir,
We must entreat some respite in a business
So needful of his presence.
App. I do protest,
You wrong yourselves thus to importune it.
Well, let it be to-morrow: I'll not sleep
Till I have made this thicket a smooth plain,
And giv'n you your true honour back again.

Icil. My lord, the distance 'twixt the camp and us
Cannot be measured in so short a time.
Let us have four days' respite.
App. You are unwise;
Rumour by that time will have fully spread
The scandal, which being ended in one hour
Will turn to air: to-morrow is the trial,
In the meantime let all contented thoughts
Attend you.
Claud. My lord, you deal unjustly
Thus to dismiss her; this is that they seek for:
Before to-morrow they'll convey her hence,
Where my claim shall not seize her.
App. Cunning knave!
You would have bond for her appearance? say?
Claud. I think the motion's honest.
App. Very good.
Icilius shall engage his honour'd word
For her appearance.
Claud. As you please, my lord;
But it were fitting her old uncle there
Were jointly bound with him.
App. Well, sir, your pleasure
Shall have satiety. You'll take our word
For her appearance; will you not, sir, I pray?
Claud. Most willingly, my lord.
App. Then, sir, you have it.
And i' th' meantime I'll take the honoured lady
Into my guardianship; and, by my life,
I'll use her in all kindness as my wife.
Icil. Now, by the gods, you shall not.
App. Shall not, what?
Icil. Not use her as your wife, sir.

App. Oh, my lord, I spake it from my heart.
Icil. Ay, very likely.
She is a virgin, sir, and must not lie
Under a man's forth coming; do you mark?
(Aside.) Not under your forthcoming, lecherous Appius.
App. Mistake me not, my lord. Our secretary
Take bonds for the appearance of this lady.
And now to you, sir; you that were my servant,
I here cashier you; never shalt thou shroud
Thy villanies under our noble roof,
Nor 'scape the whip, or the fell hangman's hook,
By warrant of our favour.
Claud. So, my lord;
I am more free to serve the gods, I hope,
Now I have lost your service.
App. Hark you, sirrah,
Who shall give bonds for your appearance, ha!
To justify your claim?
Claud. I have none, my lord.
App. Away! commit him prisoner to his chamber:
I'll keep you safe from starting.
Claud. Why, my lord?
App. Away! I will not hear you.
A judge's heart here in the midst must stand,
And move not a hair's breadth to either hand.
[*Exit.*
Num. Oh, were thy heart but of the self-same piece
Thy tongue is, Appius, how bless'd were Rome!
Icil. Post to the camp, Sertorius; thou hast heard
Th' effect of all, relate it to Virginius.

I pray thee use thy ablest horsemanship,
For it concerns us near.
Sert. I go, my lord. [*Exit.*
Icil. Sure all this is damn'd cunning.
Virg. Oh, my lord,
Seamen in tempests shun the flattering shore;
To bear full sails upon't were danger more:
So men o'erborne with greatness still hold dread,
False seeming friends that on their bosoms spread:
For this is a safe truth which never varies,
He that strikes all his sails seldom miscarries.
Icil. Must we be slaves both to a tyrant's will,
And confounding ignorance at once?
Where are we, in a mist, or is this hell?
I have seen as great as the proud judge have fell:
The bending willow yielding to each wind,
Shall keep his rooting firm, when the proud oak,
Braving the storm, presuming on his root,
Shall have his body rent from head to foot:
Let us expect the worst that may befal,
And with a noble confidence bear all. [*Exeunt.*

Enter APPIUS, CLAUDIUS, *and a* SERVANT.

App. Here, bear this packet to Minutius,
And privately deliver 't: make as much speed
As if thy father were deceas'd i' th' camp,
And that thou went'st to take th' administration
Of what he left thee. Fly!
Serv. I go, my lord. [*Exit.*
App. Oh, my trusty Claudius.
Claud. My dear lord,
Let me adore your divine policy.

You have poison'd them with sweetmeats; you have, my lord.
But what contain those letters?
App. Much importance.
Minutius is commanded by that packet
To hold Virginius prisoner in the camp
On some suspect of treason.
Claud. But, my lord, how will you answer this?
App. Tush! any fault
Or shadow of a crime will be sufficient
For his committing: thus, when he is absent,
We shall in a more calm and friendly sea
Sail to our purpose.
Claud. Mercury himself
Could not direct more safely.
App. Oh, my Claudius,
Observe this rule, *one ill must cure another;*
As aconitum, a strong poison, brings
A present cure against all serpents' stings.
In high attempts the soul hath infinite eyes,
And 'tis necessity makes men most wise.
Should I miscarry in this desperate plot,
This of my fate in aftertimes be spoken,
I'll break that with my weight on which I am broken. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Two SERVINGMEN *at one Door, at the other* CORBULO *the Clown, melancholy.*

1 *Serv.* Why, how now, Corbulo? thou wast not wont to be of this sad temper. What's the matter now?

Corb, Times change, and seasons alter,
Some men are born to the bench, and some to the halter.

What do you think now that I am?

1 *Serv.* I think thee to be Virginia's man, and Corbulo.

Corb. No, no such matter: guess again: tell me but what I am, or what manner of fellow you imagine me to be.

1 *Serv.* I take thee to be an honest good fellow.

Corb. Wide of the bow-hand still*: Corbulo is no such man.

2 *Serv.* What art thou then?

Corb. Listen, and I'll describe myself to you: I am something better than a knave, and yet come short of being an honest man; and though I can sing a treble, yet am accounted but as one of the base, being indeed, and as the case stands with me at this present, inferior to a rogue, and three degrees worse than a rascal.

1 *Serv.* How comes this to pass?

Corb. Only by my service's success. Take heed whom you serve, oh, you serving creatures! for this is all I have got by serving my lady Virginia.

2 *Serv.* Why, what of her?

Corb. She is not the woman you take her to be; for though she have borrowed no money, yet she is entered into bonds; and though you may

* This is a phrase taken from archery. "Some person," says Mr. Gifford, in a note on 'The Bondman,' "was stationed near the butts, and pointed out, after every discharge, how wide or how short the arrow fell of the mark." The reader may recollect its occurrence in the "Spanish Gipsy," vol. iv. p. 138.

like her bond will be taken. The truth is, she is challenged to be a bondwoman; now if she be a bondwoman and a slave, and I her servant and vassal, what did you take me to be? I am an ant, a gnat, a worm; a woodcock amongst birds; a hodmondod amongst flies; amongst curs a trindle tale, and amongst fishes a poor iper; but amongst servingmen worse, worse than the man's man to the under yeomen-fewterer*.

1 *Serv.* But is it possible thy Lady is challenged to be a slave? What witness have they?

Corb. Witness these fountains, these floodgates, these well-springs: the poor gentlewoman was arrested in the open market; I offered, I offered to bail her; but (though she was) I could not be taken. The grief hath gone so near my heart, that until I be made free, I shall never be mine own man. The Lord Appius hath committed her to ward, and it is thought she shall neither lie on the knight side, nor in the troping ward†; for if he may have his will of her, he means to put her in the hole. His warrant hath been out for her; but how the case stands with him, or how matters will be taken up with her, 'tis yet uncertain.

* The *yeoman-fewterer* is explained by Mr. Gilchrist, in a note on "The Picture" of Massinger, (see Gifford's edit. vol. iii. p. 219), to be the person who led the dogs in slips to the place where they were to hunt, and was therefore probably one of the lowest assistants of the huntsman.

† In Act V. of "Eastward Hoe" three different wards in the prisons are distinctly mentioned; *the knight's ward, the twopenny ward, and the hole.* I suspect, therefore, that by *troping ward* is meant the *twopenny ward*, but whether the error is intentional, or not, admits a doubt.

2 *Serv.* When shall the trial be?

Corb. I take it to be as soon as the morning is brought a-bed of a new son and heir.

2 *Serv.* And when is that?

Corb. Why, to-morrow; for every morning you know brings forth a new sun; but they are all short-liv'd, for every night she drowns them in the western sea. But to leave these enigmas, as too high for your dull apprehensions, shall I see you at the trial to-morrow?

1 *Serv.* By Jove's help I'll be there.

2 *Serv.* And I, if I live.

Corb. And I, if I die for't: here's my hand, I'll meet you. It is thought my old master will be there at the bar; for though all the timber of his house yet stand, yet my Lord Numitorius hath sent one of his posts to the camp to bid him spur, cut, and come to the sentence. Oh, we have a house at home as heavy as if it were covered with lead. But you will remember to be there.

1 *Serv.* And not to fail.

Corb. If I chance to meet you there, and that the case go against us, I will give you a quart, not of wine, but of tears; for instead of a new roll, I purpose to break my fast with sops of sorrow.

ACT IV. Scene I.

Enter Virginius *like a Slave*, Numitorius, Icilius, Valerius, Horatio, Virginia *like a Slave*, Julia, Calphurnia, *and* Nurse.

Virginius. Thanks to my noble friends: it now appears
That you have rather lov'd me than my fortune,
For that's near shipwreck'd: chance you see still ranges,
And this short dance of life is full of changes.
Appius—how hollow that name sounds! how dreadful!
It is a question whether the proud lecher
Will view us to our merit; for they say,
His memory to virtue and good men
Is still carousing Lethe. O the gods!
Not with more terror do the souls in hell
Appear before the seat of Rhadamant,
Than the poor client yonder.
[*Pointing to the tribunal.*
Num. Oh, Virginius!
Why do you wear this habit? it ill fits
Your noble person, or this reverend place.
Virginius. That's true, old man; but it well fits the case
That's now in question. If with form and show
They prove her slaved, all freedom I'll forego.

Icil. Noble Virginius,
Put out a bold and confident defence;
Search the imposture, like a cunning trier;
False metals bear the touch, but brook not fire;
Their brittleness betrays them: let your breath
Discover as much shame in them, as death
Did ever draw from offenders: let your truth
Nobly supported, void of fear or art,
Welcome whatever comes with a great heart.

Virginius. Now, by the gods, I thank thee, noble youth!
I never fear'd in a besieged town
Mines or great engines like yon lawyer's gown.

Virg. Oh, my dear lord and father, once you gave me
A noble freedom, do not see it lost
Without a forfeit; take the life you gave me,
And sacrifice it rather to the gods
Than to a villain's lust. Happy the wretch
Who, born in bondage, lives and dies a slave,
And sees no lustful projects bent upon her,
And neither knows the life nor death of honour.

Icil. We have neither justice, no nor violence,
Which should reform corruption sufficient
To cross their black premeditated doom.
Appius will seize her; all the fire in hell
Is leap'd into his bosom.

Virginius. Oh, you gods,
Extinguish it with your compassionate tears,
Although you make a second deluge spread,
And swell more high than Teneriff's high head!
Have not the wars heap'd snow sufficient
Upon this aged head, but they will still
Pile winter upon winter?

Enter APPIUS, OPPIUS, CLAUDIUS, *Six* SENATORS, *and* LICTORS.

App. (Aside.) Is he come! Say.
Now, by my life, I'll quit the general.
Num. Your reverence to the judge, good brother.
Virginius. Yes, sir, I have learnt my compliment thus: [*Bows low.*
Bless'd mean estates who stand in fear of many,
And great are curs'd for that they fear not any.
App. What, is Virginius come?
Virginius. I am here, my lord.
App. Where is your daughter?
Num. Here, my reverend lord.
(To Virg.) Your habit shews you strangely.
Virg. Oh, 'tis fit;
It suits both time and cause. Pray pardon it.
App. Where is your advocate?
Virg. I have none, my lord:
Truth needs no advocate: the unjust cause
Buys up the tongues that travel with applause
In these your thronged courts: I want not any,
And count him the most wretched that needs many.
Adv. May it please your reverend lordships—
App. What are you, sir?
Adv. Of counsel with my client Marcus Claudius.
Virginius. My lord, I undertake a desperate combat
To cope with this most eloquent lawyer:
I have no skill i' th' weapon, good my lord;

I mean I am not travell'd in your laws:
My suit is therefore, by your special goodness,
They be not wrested against me.
App. Oh, Virginius, the gods defend they should!
Virginius. Your humble servant shall ever pray for you.
Thus shall your glory be above your place,
Or those high titles which you hold in court;
For they die bless'd that die in good report.
Now, sir, I stand you.
Adv. Then have at you, sir.
May it please your lordships, here is such a case,
So full of subtlety, and, as it were,
So far benighted in an ignorant mist,
That though my reading be sufficient,
My practice more, I never was entangled
In the like pursenet. Here is one that claims
This woman for his daughter: here's another
Affirms she is his bond-slave: now the question
(With favour of the bench) I shall make plain
In two words only without circumstance.
App. Fall to your proofs.
Adv. Where are our papers?
Claud. Here, sir.
Adv. Where, sir? I vow you're the most tedious client.——
Now we come to't, my lord. Thus stands the case,
The law is clear on our sides. *(To Claud.)* Hold your prating.
That honourable Lord Virginius,
Having been married about fifteen years,
And issueless, this virgin's politic mother,
Seeing the land was likely to descend

To Numitorius—I pray, sir, listen;
You, my Lord Numitorious, attend;
We are on your side—Old Virginius
Employed in foreign wars, she sends him word
She was with child; observe it, I beseech you,
And note the trick of a deceitful woman:
She in the meantime feigns the passions
Of a great-bellied woman; counterfeits
Their passions and their qualms; and verily
All Rome held this for no impostorous stuff:
What's to be done now? Here's a rumour spread
Of a young heir, gods bless it! and belly
Bumbasted with a cushion: but there wants,
(What wants there?) nothing but a pretty babe,
Bought with some piece of money, where it skills not,
To furnish this supposed lying-in.

Nurse. I protest, my lord, the fellow i' th' nightcap
Hath not spoke one true word yet.

App. Hold you your prating, woman, till you are call'd.

Adv. 'Tis purchas'd. Where? From this man's bondwoman.
The money paid. *(To Claud.)* What was the sum of money?

Claud. A thousand drachmas.

Adv. Good; a thousand drachmas.

App. Where is that bondwoman?

Claud. She's dead, my lord.

App. Oh, dead; that makes your cause suspicious.

Adv. But here's her deposition on her death bed,

With other testimony to confirm
What we have said is true. Will't please your lordship
Take pains to view these writings? Here, my lord,
We shall not need to hold your lordships long,
We'll make short work on't.

Virginius. My lord——

App. By your favour.
If that your claim be just, how happens it
That you have discontinued it the space
Of fourteen years?

Adv. I shall resolve your lordship.

Icil. I vow this is a practis'd dialogue:
Comes it not rarely off?

Virginius. Peace; give them leave.

Adv. 'Tis very true: this gentleman at first
Thought to conceal this accident, and did so;
Only reveal'd his knowledge to the mother
Of this fair bondwoman, who bought his silence,
During her lifetime, with great sums of coin.

App. Where are your proofs of that?

Adv. Here, my good lord, with depositions likewise.

App. Well, go on.

Adv. For your question
Of discontinuance: put case my slave
Run away from me, dwell in some near city
The space of twenty years, and there grow rich,
It is in my discretion, by your favour,
To seize him when I please.

App. That's very true.

Virg. Cast not your nobler beams, you reverend judges,
On such a putrified dunghill.

App. By your favour: you shall be heard anon.
Virginius. My lords, believe not this spruce orator:
Had I but fee'd him first, he would have told
As smooth a tale on our side.
App. Give us leave.
Virginius. He deals in formal glosses, cunning shows,
And cares not greatly which way the case goes.
Examine, I beseech you, this old woman,
Who is the truest witness of her birth.
App. Soft you, is she your only witness?
Virginius. She is, my lord.
App. Why, is it possible
Such a great lady in her time of child-birth,
Should have no other witness but a nurse?
Virg. For ought I know the rest are dead, my lord.
App. Dead? no, my lord, belike they were of counsel
With your deceased lady, and so sham'd
Twice to give colour to so vile an act.
Thou, nurse, observe me; thy offence already
Doth merit punishment beyond our censure;
Pull not more whips upon thee.
Nurse. I defy your whips, my lord.
App. Command her silence, Lictors.
Virginius. Oh, injustice! you frown away my witness:
Is this law? is this uprightness?
App. Have you viewed the writings?
This is a trick to make our slaves our heirs
Beyond prevention.
Virginius. Appius, wilt thou hear me?

You have slander'd a sweet lady that now sleeps
In a most noble monument. Observe me,
I would have ta'en her simple word to gauge
Before his soul or thine.

App. That makes thee wretched.
Old man, I am sorry for thee that thy love,
By custom is grown natural, which by nature
Should be an absolute loathing: note the sparrow,
That having hatch'd a cuckoo, when it sees
Her brood a monster to her proper kind,
Forsakes it, and with more fear shuns the nest,
Than she had care i' th' spring to have it dress'd.
Cast thy affection then behind thy back,
And think——

Adv. Be wise; take counsel of your friends.
You have many soldiers in their time of service
Father strange children.

Virginius. True; and pleaders too,
When they are sent to visit provinces.
You, my most neat and cunning orator,
Whose tongue is quicksilver, pray thee, good Janus,
Look not so many several ways at once,
But go to th' point.

Adv. I will, and keep you out
At point's end, though I am no soldier.

App. First the oath of the deceased bond-woman.

Adv. A very virtuous matron.

App. Join'd with the testimony of Claudius.

Adv. A most approved honest gentleman.

App. Besides six other honest gentlemen.

Adv. All knights, and there's no question but their oaths
Will go for current,

App. See, my reverend lords,
And wonder at a case so evident.
Virginius. My lord, I knew it.
Adv. Observe, my lord, how their own policy
Confounds them. Had your lordship yesterday
Proceeded, as 'twas fit, to a just sentence,
The apparel and the jewels that she wore,
More worth than all her tribe, had then been due
Unto our client: now, to cozen him
Of such a forfeit, see they bring the maid
In her most proper habit, bondslave like,
And they will save by th' hand too. Please your lordships,
I crave a sentence.
Virginius. Appius.
Virg. My lord.
Icil. Lord Appius.
Virginius. Now, by the gods, here's juggling!
Num. Who cannot counterfeit a dead man's hand?
Virginius. Or hire some villains to swear forgeries?
Icil. Claudius was brought up in your house, my lord,
And that's suspicious.
Num. How is't probable,
That our wife being present at the child-birth,
Whom this did nearest concern, should ne'er reveal it?
Virginius. Or if ours dealt thus cunningly, how haps it
Her policy, as you term it, did not rather
Provide an issue male to cheer the father?
Adv. I'll answer each particular,
App. It needs not;

Here's witness, most sufficient witness:
Think you, my lord, our laws are writ in snow,
And that your breath can melt them?
Virginius. No, my lord,
We have not such hot livers*: mark you that.
Virg. Remember yet the gods, O Appius,
Who have no part in this. Thy violent lust
Shall, like the biting of the envenom'd aspic,
Steal thee to hell. So subtle are thy evils,
In life they'll seem good angels, in death devils.
App. Observe you not this scandal?
Icil. Sir, 'tis none.
I'll show thy letters full of violent lust
Sent to this lady.
App. Wilt thou breathe a lie
'Fore such a reverend audience?
Icil. That place
Is sanctuary to thee. Lie? See here they are.
App. My lords, these are but dilatory shifts.
Sirrah, I know you to the very heart,
And I'll observe you.
Icil. Do, but do it with justice.
Clear thyself first, O Appius, ere thou judge
Our imperfections rashly; for we wot
The office of a justice is perverted quite
When one thief hangs another.
1 *Sen.* You are too bold.
App. Lictors take charge of him.
[*They seize Icilius.*
Icil. 'Tis very good.
Will no man view these papers? What, not one?

* In allusion to the lustful motive by which Appius was influenced: the liver being then supposed the seat of the amorous passions.

Jove, thou hast found a rival upon earth,
His nod strikes all men dumb. My duty to you.
The ass that carried Isis on his back,
Thought that the superstitious people kneel'd
To give his dulness humble reverence:
If thou think'st so, proud judge, I let thee see
I bend low to thy gown, but not to thee.

Virginius. There's one in hold already. Noble youth,
Fetters grace one being worn for speaking truth:
I'll lie with thee, I swear, though in a dungeon.
(To App.) The injuries you do us we shall pardon,
But it is just the wrongs which we forgive,
The gods are charg'd therewith to see revenged.

App. Come, you're a proud Plebeian.

Virg. True, my lord:
Proud in the glory of my ancestors,
Who have continued these eight hundred years:
The heralds have not known you these eight months.

App. Your madness wrongs you; by my soul, I love you.

Virginius. Thy soul?
Oh, thy opinion, old Pythagoras,
Whither, oh! whither should thy black soul fly?
Into what ravenous bird, or beast most vile?
Only into a weeping crocodile.
Love me? Thou lov'st me, Appius, as the earth loves rain,
Thou fain wouldst swallow me.

App. Know you the place you speak in?

Virginius. I'll speak freely.
Good men too much trusting their innocence
Do not betake them to that just defence

Which gods and nature gave them; but even wink
In the black tempest, and so fondly sink.
App. Let us proceed to sentence.
Virginius. Ere you speak
One parting farewell, let me borrow of you
To take of my Virginia.
App. Now, my lords,
We shall have fair confession of the truth.
Pray take your course.
Virginius. Farewell, my sweet Virginia: never, never
Shall I taste fruit of the most blessed hope
I had in thee. Let me forget the thought
Of thy most pretty infancy; when first
Returning from the wars, I took delight
To rock thee in my target; when my girl
Would kiss her father in his burganet
Of glittering steel hung 'bout his armed neck;
And, viewing the bright metal, smile to see
Another fair Virginia smile on thee:
When I first taught thee how to go, to speak:
And when my wounds have smarted, I have sung
With an unskilful, yet a willing voice,
To bring my girl asleep. Oh, my Virginia,
When we begun to be, begun our woes,
Increasing still, as dying life still grows!
App. This tediousness doth much offend the court.
Silence! attend her sentence.
Virginius. Hold; without sentence I'll resign her freely,
Since you will prove her to be none of mine.
App. See, see, how evidently truth appears.
Receive her, Claudius.

Virginius. Thus I surrender her into the court
[*Kills her.*
Of all the gods. And see, proud Appius, see,
Although not justly, I have made her free.
And if thy lust with this act be not fed,
Bury her in thy bowels now she's dead.

Omnes. Oh, horrid act!

App. Lay hand upon the murderer!

Virginius. Oh, for a ring of pikes to circle me!
What! have I stood the brunt of thousand enemies
Here to be slain by hangmen? No; I'll fly
To safety in the camp. [*Exit.*

App. Some pursue the villain,
Others take up the body. Madness, and rage,
Are still th' attendants of old doating age.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes to the Roman Camp.—Enter Two SOLDIERS.

1 *Sold.* Is our hut swept clean?

2 *Sold.* As I can make it.

1 *Sold.* 'Tis betwixt us two;
But how many think'st thou, bred of Roman blood,
Did lodge with us last night?

2 *Sold.* More, I think, than the camp hath enemies;
They are not to be number'd.

1 *Sold.* Comrague *, I fear Appius will doom us to Acteon's death,

* *Comrogue* occurs in the "City Madam" of Massinger, (Act IV. Scene I.) and means *companion in villany.* As the Soldier speaks seriously, I am inclined to think we should read *comrade,* or, as it is sometimes written, *comerade.*

To be worried by the cattle that we feed.
How goes the day?

2 *Sold.* My stomach has struck twelve.

1 *Sold.* Come, see what provant our knapsack yields.

This is our store, our garner.

2 *Sold.* A small pittance.

1 *Sold.* Feeds Appius thus? Is this a city feast?
This crust doth taste like date stones, and this thing
If I knew what to call it——

2 *Sold.* I can tell you: cheese struck in years.

1 *Sold.* I do not think but this same crust was bak'd,
And this cheese frighted out of milk and whey,
Before we two were soldiers: though it be old
I see't can crawl: what living things be these
That walk so freely 'tween the rind and pith?
For here's no sap left.

2 *Sold.* They call them gentles*.

1 *Sold.* Therefore 'tis thought fit,
That soldiers, by profession gentlemen,
Should thus be fed with gentles. I am stomach sick,
I must have some strong water.

2 *Sold.* Where will you have't?

1 *Sold.* In yon green ditch, a place which none can pass
But he must stop his nose, thou know'st it well;
There where the two dead dogs lie.

2 *Sold.* Yes, I know't.

1 *Sold.* And see the cat that lies a distance off

* *Gentles* are rather the maggots *bred in carrion.*

Be flayed for supper: though we dine to-day
As Dutchmen feed their soldiers, we will sup
Bravely like Roman leaguerers.

2 *Sold.* Sir, the general.

1 *Sold.* We'll give him place:
But tell none of our dainties, lest we have
Too many guests to supper.

Enter MINUTIUS, *reading a Letter.*

Min. Most sure 'tis so, it cannot otherwise be:
Either Virginius is degenerate
From the ancient virtues he was wont to boast,
Or in some strange displeasure with the senate;
Why should these letters else from Appius
Confine him a close prisoner to the camp?
And, which confirms his guilt, why should he fly?
Needs then must I incur some high displeasure
For negligence to let him thus escape;
Which to excuse, and that it may appear
I have no hand with him, but am of faction
Oppos'd in all things to the least misdeed,
I will cashier him, and his tribuneship
Bestow upon some noble gentleman
Belonging to the camp. Soldiers and friends,
You that beneath Virginius' colours march'd,
By strict command from the Decemvirat,
We take you from the charge of him late fled,
And his authority, command, and honour
We give this worthy Roman. Know his colours,
And prove his faithful soldiers.

Roman. Warlike general,
My courage and my forwardness in battle,

Shall plead how well I can deserve the title,
To be a Roman tribune.

Enter a SOLDIER *in haste.*

Min. Now, the news?

1 *Sold.* Virginius, in a strange shape of distraction,
Enters the camp, and at his heels a legion
Of all estates, growths, ages, and degrees,
With breathless paces dog his frighted steps.
It seems half Rome's unpeopled with a train,
That either for some mischief done, pursue him,
Or to attend some uncouth novelty.

Min. Some wonder our fear promises. Worthy soldiers,
Martial yourselves, and entertain this novel
Within a ring of steel. Wall in this portent
With men and harness, be it ne'er so dreadful.
He's enter'd by the clamour of the camp,
That entertains him with these echoing shouts.
Affection that in soldiers' hearts is bred,
Survives the wounded, and outlives the dead.

VIRGINIUS *enters with his Arm stripped up to the Elbow all bloody, and holding the fatal Knife in his Hand: he advances into the midst of the Soldiers, and then stops and addresses them.*

Virginius. Have I in all this populous assembly
Of soldiers, that have prov'd Virginius' valour,
One friend? Let him come thrill his partisan
Against this breast, that through a large wide wound
My mightly soul might rush out of this prison,

To fly more freely to yon crystal palace,
Where honour sits enthronis'd. What! no friend?
Can this great multitude then yield an enemy
That hates my life? Here let him seize it freely.
What! no man strike? Am I so well beloved?
Minutius, then to thee. If in this camp
There lives one man so just to punish sin,
So charitable to redeem from torments
A wretched soldier, at his worthy hand
I beg a death.

Min. What means Virginius?

Virginius. Or if the general's heart be so obdure
To an old begging soldier, have I here
No honest legionary of mine own troop,
At whose bold hand and sword, if not entreat,
I may command a death?

1 *Sold.* Alas! good captain.

Min. Virginius, you have no command at all:
Your companies are elsewhere now bestowed.
Besides, we have a charge to stay you here,
And make you the camp's prisoner.

Virginius. General, thanks:
For thou hast done as much with one harsh word
As I begg'd from their weapons: thou hast kill'd me,
But with a living death.

Min. Besides, I charge you
To speak what means this ugly face of blood,
You put on your distractions? What's the reason
All Rome pursues you, covering those high hills,
As if they dog'd you for some damn'd act?
What have you done?

Virginius. I have play'd the parricide,
Kill'd mine own child.

Min. Virginia?

Virginius. Yes, even she.
These rude hands ripp'd her, and her innocent blood
Flow'd above my elbows.
Min. Kill'd her willingly?
Virginius. Willingly, with advice, premeditation,
And settled purpose; and see still I wear
Her crimson colours, and these withered arms
Are dy'd in her heart's blood.
Min. Most wretched villain!
Virginius. But how? I lov'd her life. Lend me amongst you
One speaking organ to discourse her death,
It is too harsh an imposition
To lay upon a father. Oh, my Virginia!
Min. How agrees this? love her, and murder her?
Virginius. Yes: give me but a little leave to drain
A few red tears, (for soldiers should weep blood)
And I'll agree them well. Attend me all.
Alas! might I have kept her chaste and free,
This life so oft engag'd for ungrateful Rome,
Lay in her bosom: but when I saw her pull'd
By Appius' Lictors to be claim'd a slave,
And dragg'd into a public sessions-house,
Divorc'd from her fore spousals with Icilius,
A noble youth, and made a bondwoman,
Enforc'd by violence from her father's arms
To be a prostitute and paramour
To the rude twinings of a lecherous judge;
Then, then, oh, loving soldiers, (I'll not deny it,
For 'twas mine honour, my paternal pity,
And the sole act, for which I love my life;)
Then lustful Appius, he that sways the land,
Slew poor Virginia by this father's hand.

1 *Sold.* Oh, villain Appius!
2 *Sold.* Oh, noble Virginius!
Virginius. To you I appeal, you are my sentencers:
Did Appius right, or poor Virginius wrong?
Sentence my fact with a free general tongue.
1 *Sold.* Appius is the parricide.
2 *Sold.* Virginius guiltless of his daughter's death.
Min. If this be true, Virginius, (as the moan
Of all the Roman fry that follows you
Confirms at large), this cause is to be pitied,
And should not die revengeless.
Virginius. Noble Minutius,
Thou hast a daughter, thou hast a wife too;
So most of you have, soldiers; why might not this
Have happen'd you? Which of you all, dear friends,
But now, even now, may have your wives deflower'd,
Your daughter's slav'd, and made a lictor's prey?
Think them not safe in Rome, for mine lived there.
*Roman**. It is a common cause.
1 *Sold.* Appius shall die for't.
2 *Sold.* Let's make Virginius general.
Omnes. A general! a general! let's make Virginius general!
Mun. It shall be so. Virginius, take my charge:
The wrongs are thine; so violent and so weighty

* This is not the speech of one of the people that had followed Virginius from Rome, as might at first be supposed; they do not appear to have entered on the stage; but belongs, I conceive, to the officer whom Minutius had just before appointed to supersede Virginius in his command, and who is no otherwise designated throughout the play.

That none but he that lost so fair a child,
Knows how to punish. By the gods of Rome,
Virginius shall succeed my full command.

Virginius. What's honour unto me? a weak old man,
Weary of life, and covetous of a grave:
I am a dead man now Virginia lives not.
The self-same hand that dar'd to save from shame
A child, dares in the father act the same.
[*Offers to kill himself.*

1 *Sold.* Stay, noble general.

Min. You much forget revenge, Virginius.
Who, if you die, will take your cause in hand,
And proscribe Appius, should you perish thus?

Virginius. Thou oughtest, Minutius: soldiers, so ought you:
I'm out of fear; my noble wife's expir'd;
My daughter (of bless'd memory) the object
Of Appius' lust, lives 'mongst th' Elysian vestals;
My house yields none fit for his lictors' spoil.
You that have wives lodg'd in yon prison, Rome,
Have lands unrifled, houses yet unseiz'd,
Your freeborn daughters yet unstrumpeted,
Prevent these mischiefs yet while you have time.

1 *Sold.* We will by you, our noble general.

2 *Sold.* He that was destin'd to preserve great Rome.

Virginius. I accept your choice, in hope to guard you all
From my inhuman sufferings. Be't my pride
That I have bred a daughter whose chaste blood
Was spilt for you, and for Rome's lasting good.

ACT V. Scene I.

Enter Oppius, *a* Senator, *and the* Advocate.

Opp. Is Appius then committed?
Sen. So 'tis rumour'd.
Opp. How will you bear you in this turbulent state?
You are a member of that wretched faction:
I wonder how you 'scape imprisonment.
Adv. Let me alone; I have learnt with the wise hedgehog,
To stop my cave that way the tempest drives.
Never did bear-whelp tumbling down a hill,
With more art shrink his head betwixt his claws,
Than I will work my safety. Appius
Is in the sand already up to th' chin,
And shall I hazard landing on that shelf?
He's a wise friend that first befriends himself.
Opp. What is your course of safety?
Adv. Marry, this:
Virginius, with his troops, is entering Rome,
And it is like that in the market-place
My Lord * Icilius and himself shall meet:

* The quarto reads, "My *L.* Icilius." There can be no doubt of the propriety of the alteration: we frequently find in the old copies *M.* placed for *Master*, and that too where it is absolutely necessary that the *initial letter only* should be *pronounced* to preserve the measure.

Now to encounter these, two such great armies,
Where lies my court of guard?
Sen. Why, in your heels.
There are strange dogs uncoupled.
Adv. You are deceiv'd:
I have studied a most eloquent oration,
That shall applaud their fortune, and distaste
The cruelty of Appius.
Sen. Very good, sir.
It seems then you will rail upon your lord,
Your late good benefactor?
Adv. By the way, sir.
Sen. Protest Virginia was no bondwoman,
And read her noble pedigree?
Adv. By the way, sir.
Opp. Could you not by the way too find occasion
To beg Lord Appius' lands?
Adv. And by the way
Perchance I will; for I will gull them all
Most palpably.
Opp. Indeed you have the art
Of flattery.
Adv. Of rhetoric you would say.
And I'll begin my smooth oration thus:
Most learned captains——
Sen. Fie, fie, that's horrible! most of your captains
Are utterly unlearned.
Adv. Yet, I assure you,
Most of them know arithmetic so well,
That in a muster, to preserve dead pays,
They'll make twelve stand for twenty *.

* Webster's allusions, as the reader cannot fail to have noticed, like his contemporaries, are all to his own age and country.

Opp. Very good.

Adv. Then I proceed:

I do applaud your fortunes, and commend
In this your observation, noble shake-rags:
The helmet shall no more harbour the spider,
But it shall serve to carouse sack and cider.
The rest within I'll study. [*Exit.*

Opp. Farewell, Proteus,
And I shall wish thy eloquent bravado
May shield thee from the whip and bastinado.
Now in this furious tempest let us glide,
With folded sails at pleasure of the tide.

Enter ICILIUS, HORATIO, VALERIUS, NUMITORIUS, *and Soldiers on one Side;* VIRGINIUS, MINUTIUS, *and Soldiers on the other. Vessels of Wine are seen standing by.*

Icil. Stand!

Virginius. Make a stand!

Icil. A parley with Virginius.

Min. We will not trust our general 'twixt the armies,
But upon terms of hostage.

The abuse here mentioned seems to have been then sufficiently common: Belgarde alludes to it in "The Unnatural Combat" of Massinger, Act IV. Scene II.

"O you commanders,
That, like me, *have no dead pays,* nor can cozen
The commissary at a muster."

And Sir William Davenant (as quoted by Giffard) enumerates it among other abuses in the army:

"Can you not gull the state finely,
Muster up your ammunition cassocks stuff'd with straw,
Number a hundred forty-nine dead pays,
And thank heaven for your arithmetic?"

THE SIEGE, Act III.

Num. Well advised:
Nor we our general. Who for the leaguer?
Min. Ourself.
Virginius. Who for the city?
Icil. Numitorius.
[*Minutius and Numitorius meet, embrace, salute the generals.*
Num. How is it with your sorrow, noble brother?
Virginius. I am forsaken of the gods, old man.
Num. Preach not that wretched doctrine to yourself,
It will beget despair.
Virginius. What do you call
A burning fever? Is not that a devil?
It shakes me like an earthquake. Wilt a, wilt a*,
Give me some wine?
Num. Oh, it is hurtful for you!
Virginius. Why so? Are all things that the appetite
Of man doth covet in his perfect'st health,
Whatever art or nature have invented,
To make the boundless wish of man contented,
Are all his poison? Give me the wine there.—— When?
Do you grudge me a poor cup of drink? Say, say.
Now by the gods, I'll leave enough behind me
To pay my debts; and for the rest, no matter
Who scrambles for't.
Num. Here, my noble brother!
Alas! your hand shakes. I will guide it to you.
Virginius. 'Tis true, it trembles. Welcome, thou just palsy!

* "*Wilt 'a;*" a contraction of *wilt thou,* now become vulgar and obscure.

'Twere pity this should do me longer service,
Now it hath slain my daughter. So, I thank you:
[*Numitorious puts a cup of wine to his mouth, of which he drinks.*
Now I have lost all comforts in the world,
It seems I must a little longer live,
Be't but to serve my belly.
Min. Oh, my lord,
This violent fever took him late last night:
Since when, the cruelty of the disease
Hath drawn him into sundry passions,
Beyond his wonted temper.
Icil. 'Tis the gods
Have poured their justice on him.
Virginius. You are sadly met, my lord.
Icil. Would we had met
In a cold grave together two months since,
I should not then have curs'd you.
Virginius. Ha! what's that?
Icil. Old man, thou hast shewed thyself a noble Roman,
But an unnatural father: thou hast turned
My bridal to a funeral. What devil
Did arm thy fury with a lion's paw,
The dragon's tail, with the bull's double horn,
The cormorant's beak, the cockatrice's eyes,
The scorpion's teeth, and all these by a father
To be employed upon his innocent child?
Virginius. Young man, I love thy true description:
I am happy now, that one beside myself
Doth teach me for this act. Yet were I pleased,
I cou'd approve the deed most just and noble;

And sure posterity, which truly renders
To each man his desert, shall praise me for't.
Icil. Come, 'twas unnatural and damnable.
Virginius. You need not interrupt me: here's a fury [*Laying his hand on his breast.*
Will do it for you! You are a Roman knight:
What was your oath when you receiv'd your knighthood?
A parcel of it is, as I remember,
Rather to die with honour, than to live
In servitude. Had my poor girl been ravish'd,
In her dishonour, and in my sad grief,
Your love, and pity, quickly had ta'en end:
Great mens' misfortunes thus have ever stood,
They touch none nearly, but their nearest blood.
What do you mean to do? It seems, my lord,
Now you have caught the sword within your hand,
Like a madman you'll draw it to offend
Those that best love you; and perhaps the counsel
Of some loose unthrifts, and vile malcontents
Hearten you to it: go to! take your course,
My faction shall not give the least advantage
To murderers, to banquerouts, or thieves,
To fleece the commonwealth.
Icil. Do you term us so?
Shall I reprove your rage, or is't your malice?
He that would tame a lion, doth not use
The goad or wier'd whip, but a sweet voice,
A fearful stroking, and with food in hand
Must ply his wanton hunger.
Virginius. Want of sleep
Will do it better than all these, my lord.

I would not have you wake for others' ruin,
Lest you turn mad with watching.

Icil. Oh, you gods!
You are now a general; learn to know your place,
And use your noble calling modestly.
Better had Appius been an upright judge,
And yet an evil man, than honest man,
And yet a dissolute judge; for all disgrace
Lights less upon the person than the place.
You are i' th' city now, where if you raise
But the least uproar, even your father's house
Shall not be free from ransack. Piteous fires
That chance in tow'rs of stone, are not so feared
As those that light in flax-shops; for there's food
For eminent ruin.

Min. Oh, my noble lord!
Let not your passion bring a fatal end
To such a good beginning. All the world
Shall honour that deed in him, which first
Grew to a reconcilement.

Icil. Come, my lord,
I love your friendship; yes, in sooth, I do;
But will not seal it with that bloody hand.
Join we our armies. No fantastic copy,
Or borrowed president will I assume
In my revenge. There's hope yet you may live
To outwear this sorrow.

Virginius. Oh, impossible!
A minute's joy to me would quite cross nature,
As those that long have dwelt in noisome rooms,
Swoon presently if they but scent perfumes.

Icil. To the senate! Come, no more of this sad
tale;

For such a tell-tale may we term our grief,
And doth as 'twere so listen to her own words,
Envious of others' sleep, because she wakes.
I ever would converse with a griev'd person
In a long journey to beguile the day,
Or winter evening to pass time away.
March on, and let proud Appius in our view,
Like a tree rotted, fall that way he grew.

Scene a Prison—APPIUS *and* CLAUDIUS *are discovered fettered and gyved.*

App. The world is chang'd now. All damnations
Seize on the hydra-headed multitude,
That only gape for innovation.
Oh, who would trust a people?
Claud. Nay, who would not,
Rather than one rear'd on a popular suff'rage,
Whose station's built on avees and applause?
There's no firm structure on these airy bases.
Oh, fie upon such greatness!
App. The same hands
That yesterday to hear me conscionate,
And oratorize, rung shrill plaudits forth
In sign of grace, now in contempt and scorn
Hurry me to this place of darkness.
Claud. Could not their poisons rather spend themselves
On th' judge's folly, but must it needs stretch
To me his servant, and sweep me along?
Curse on the inconstant rabble!
App. Grieves it thee
To impart my sad disaster?

Claud. Marry doth it.

App. Thou shared'st a fortune with me in my greatness;
I hal'd thee after when I climb'd my state,
And shrink'st thou at my ruin?

Claud. I loved your greatness,
And would have trac'd you in the golden path
Of sweet promotion; but this your decline
Sours all these hoped sweets.

App. 'Tis the world right.
Such gratitude a great man still shall have
That trusts unto a temporizing slave.

Claud. Slave? Good. Which of us too
In our dejection is basest? I am most sure
Your loathsome dungeon is as dark as mine;
Your conscience for a thousand sentences
Wrongly denounc'd, much more oppress'd than mine;
Then which is the most slave?

App. Oh, double baseness,
To hear a drudge thus with his lord compare!
Great men disgrac'd, slaves to their servants are.

Enter VIRGINIUS, ICILIUS, MINUTIUS, NUMITORIUS, HORATIO, VALERIUS, *and* OPPIUS *with Soldiers.*

Virginius. Soldiers, keep a strong guard whilst we survey
Our sentenc'd prisoners: and from this deep dungeon
Keep off that great concourse, whose violent hands
Would ruin this stone building, and drag hence

This impious judge piecemeal, to tear his limbs
Before the law convince him *.
Icil. See these monsters,
Whose fronts the fair Virginia's innocent blood
Hath vizarded with such black ugliness,
That they are loathsome to all good mens' souls.
Speak, damned judge! how canst thou purge thyself
From lust and blood?
App. I do confess myself
Guilty of both: yet hear me, noble Romans.
Virginius, thou dost but supply my place,
I thine: fortune hath lift thee to my chair,
And thrown me headlong to thy pleading bar.
If in mine eminence I was stern to thee,
Shunning my rigour, likewise shun my fall;
And being mild where I shew'd cruelty,
Establish still thy greatness. Make some use
Of this my bondage. With indifference
Survey me, and compare my yesterday
With this sad hour, my height with my decline,
And give them equal balance.
Virginius. Uncertain fate! but yesterday his breath
Aw'd Rome, and his least torved † frown was death:
I cannot choose but pity and lament,
So high a rise should have such low descent.
Icil. (Aside.) He's ready to forget his injury.

* "*Convince* him," *i. e. convict* him. So in "Troilus and Cressida:"

"Else might the world *convince* of levity
As well my undertakings as your counsels."

† "*Torved*," *i. e.* austere, stern.

(Oh, too relenting age!) Thinks not Virginius,
If he should pardon Appius this black deed,
And set him once more in the ivory chair,
He would be wary to avoid the like,
Become a new man, a more upright judge,
And deserve better of the common weal?

Virginius. 'Tis like he would.

Icil. Nay, if you thus begin,
I'll fetch that shall anatomize his sin. [*Exit.*

Num. Virginius, you are too remiss to punish
Deeds of this nature: you must fashion now
Your actions to your place, not to your passion:
Severity to such acts is as necessary
As pity to the tears of innocence.

Min. He speaks but law and justice.
Make good the streets with your best men at arms.
[*A shout.*
Valerius and Horatio, know the reason
Of this loud uproar, and confused noise.
[*Exeunt Val. and Hor.*
Although my heart be melting at the fall
Of men in place and office, we'll be just
To punish murd'rous acts, and censure lust.

Enter VALERIUS *and* HORATIO.

Val. Icilius, worthy lord, bears through the street
The body of Virginia towards this prison;
Which when it was discovered to the people,
Mov'd such a mournful clamour, that their cries
Pierc'd heaven, and forc'd tears from their sorrowing eyes.

Hor. Here comes Icilius.

Enter ICILIUS *with the body of* VIRGINIA.

Icil. Where was thy pity when thou slewest
this maid,
Thou would'st extend to Appius? Pity! See
Her wounds still bleeding at the horrid presence
Of yon stern murderer*, till she find revenge;
Nor will these drops stanch, or these springs be dry
Till theirs be set a bleeding. Shall her soul
(Whose essence some suppose lives in the blood†)
Still labour without rest? Will old Virginius
Murder her once again in this delay?

Virginius. Pause there, Icilius.
This sight hath stiffen'd all my operant powers,
Ic'd all my blood, benumb'd my motion quite.
I'll pour my soul into my daughter's belly,
And with a soldier's tears embalm her wounds.
My only dear Virginia! [*Weeps over the body.*

App. Leave this passion,
Proceed to your just sentence.

Virginius. We will. Give me two swords.
Appius, grasp this;

* This alludes to an opinion commonly received at that time, that the murdered body bleeds in the presence of the murderer. So Shakspeare in "Richard III."

O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds
Open their congeal'd mouths, and bleed afresh!—
Blush, blush, thou lump of foul deformity;
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood."

† It is possible our poet might allude to a passage in Leviticus:

"The life of the flesh is in the blood—
It is the blood that maketh an atonement
For the soul."

You, Claudius, that. You shall be your own
hangmen:
Do justice on yourselves. You made Virginius
Sluice his own blood lodg'd in his daughter's
breast,
Which your own hands shall act upon yourselves.
If you be Romans, and retain their spirits,
Redeem a base life with a noble death,
And through your lust-burnt veins confine* your
breath.

App. Virginius is a noble justicer:
Had I my crooked paths levell'd by thine,
I had not swayed the balance. Think not, lords,
But he that had the spirit to oppose the gods,
Dares likewise suffer what their powers inflict.
I have not dreaded famine, fire, nor strage†,
Their common vengeance; poison in my cup,
Nor dagger in my bosom, the revenge
Of private men for private injuries;
Nay, more than these, not fear'd to commit evil,
And shall I tremble at the punishment?
Now with asmuch resolved constancy,
As I offended, will I pay the mulct,
And this black stain laid on my family,
(Than which a nobler hath not place in Rome)
Wash with my blood away. Learn of me, Claudius;
I'll teach thee what thou never studied'st yet,
That's bravely how to die. Judges are term'd
The gods on earth; and such as are corrupt
Read me in this my ruin. Those that succeed me

* "*Confine*," *i. e.* expel: a very unusual use of the word.

† "*Strage*," *i. e.* slaughter, carnage.

That so offend, thus punish. This the sum of all,
Appius that sinn'd, by Appius' hand shall fall.
[*Kills himself.*

Virginius. He died as boldly as he basely err'd,
And so should every true-bred Roman do.
And he whose life was odious, thus expiring,
In his death forceth pity. Claudius, thou
Wast follower of his fortunes in his being,
Therefore in his not being imitate
His fair example.

Claud. Death is terrible
Unto a conscience that's oppress'd with guilt.
They say there is Elysium and hell,
The first I have forfeited, the latter fear.
My skin is not sword proof.

Icil. Why dost thou pause?

Claud. For mercy, mercy, I entreat you all.
Is't not sufficient for Virginius slain
That Appius suffered? one of noble blood,
And eminence in place, for a plebeian?
Besides, he was my lord and might command me:
If I did ought 'twas by compulsion, lords;
And therefore I crave mercy.

Icil. Shall I doom him?

Virginius. Do, good Icilius.

Icil. Then I sentence thus:
Thou hadst a mercy, most unmeriting slave,
Of which thy base birth was not capable,
Which we take off by taking thence thy sword.
And note the difference 'twixt a noble strain,
And one bred from the rabble: both alike
Dar'd to transgress, but see their odds in death:
Appius dy'd like a Roman gentleman,
And a man both ways knowing; but this slave

Is only sensible of vicious living,
Not apprehensive of a noble death.
Therefore as a base malefactor (we)
And timorous slave, give him (as he deserves)
Unto the common hangman.

Claud. What, no mercy?

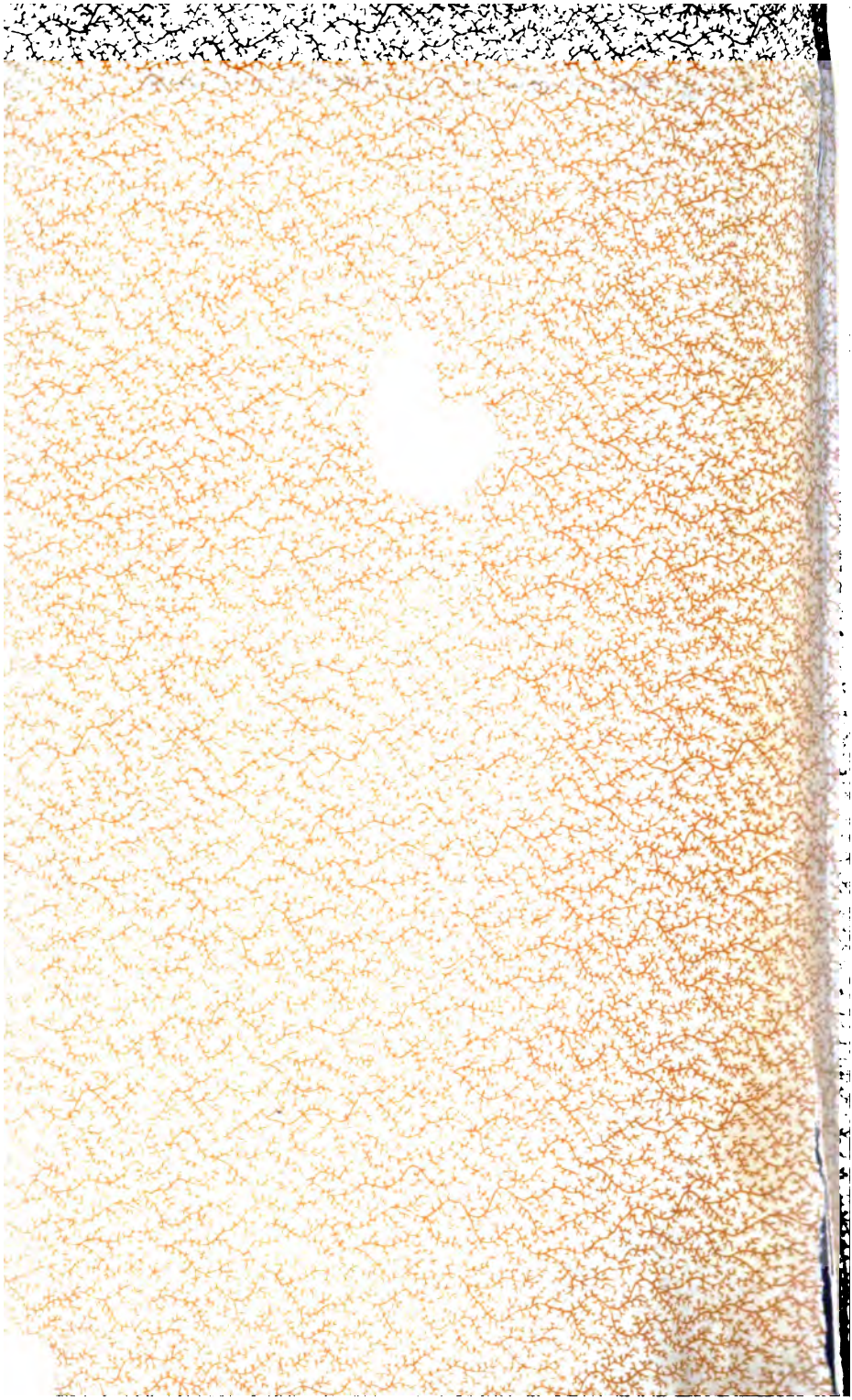
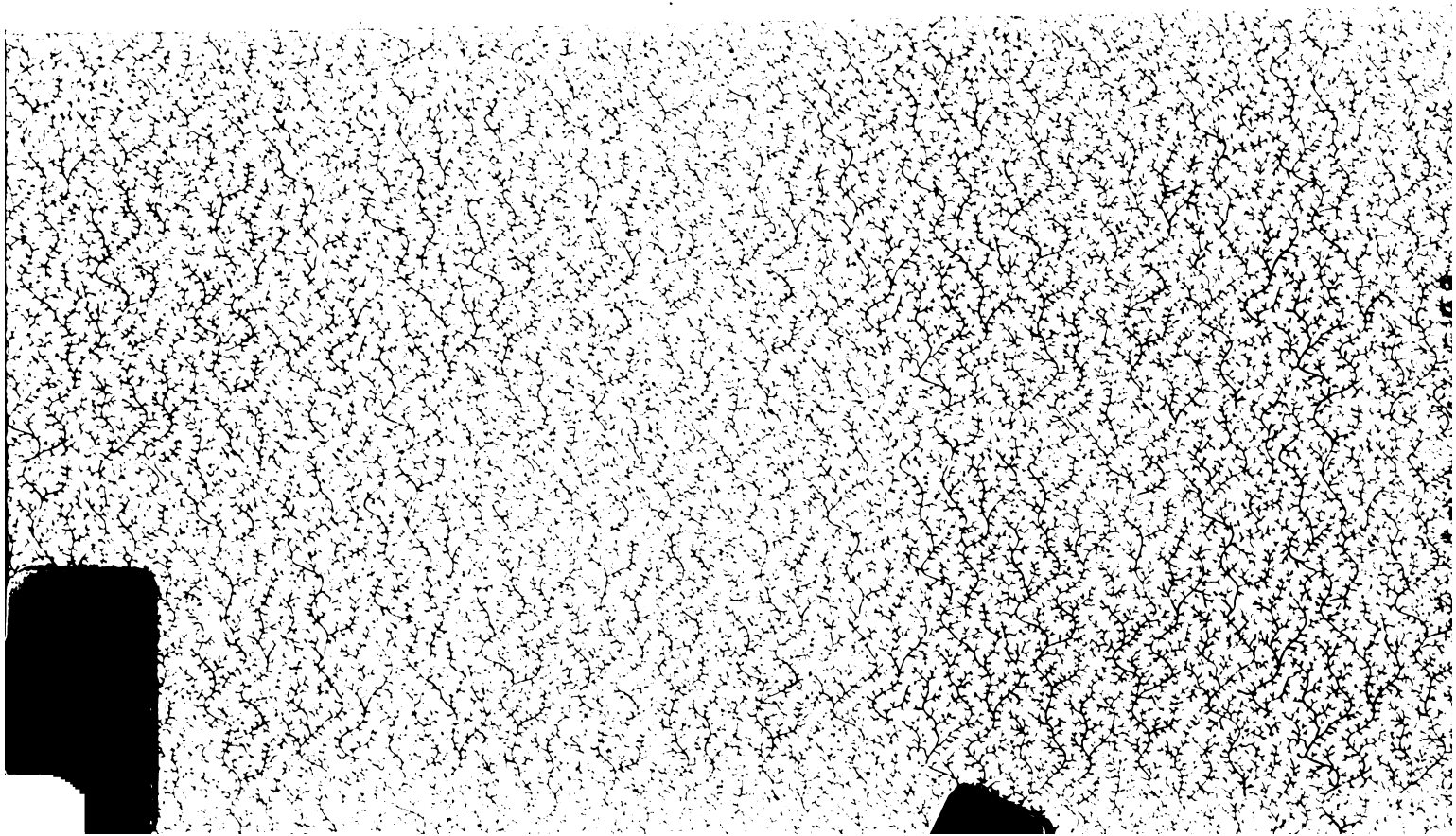
Icil. Stop's mouth!
Away with him! the life of the Decemviri
Expires in them. Rome, thou at length art free,
Restored unto thine ancient liberty.

Min. Of consuls: which bold Junius Brutus first
Begun in Tarquin's fall. Virginius, you
And young Icilius shall his place succeed,
So by the people's suffrage 'tis decreed *.

Virginius. We martial then our soldiers in that name
Of consuls, honoured with these golden bays.
Two fair, but ladies most unfortunate,
Have in their ruins rais'd declining Rome,
Lucretia and Virginia, both renown'd
For chastity. Soldiers and noble Romans,
To grace her death, whose life hath freed great Rome,
March with her corse to her sad funeral tomb.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

* From the Fasti Romani Consulares, it appears that L. Valerius Poplicola Potitus, and T. Horatius Barbatus, were appointed consuls on the deposition of the Decemviri, in the year before Christ 449. T. Virginius was chosen consul the year following; but the Virginius in the present play was *Lucius* Virginius.

END OF VOL. V.

Whittingham and Rowland, Printers, Goswell Street, London.